EASY COMPANY: ALL THE WAY TO HITLER'S LAIR—70th YEAR

The Band of Brothers

FROM D-DAY TO VICTORY

AMERICA IN WWII SPECIAL ISSUE

THE LEGACY OF EASY COMPANY

Through the War And on to Fame With America's Best-Known WWII Unit

Easy Company Men

Actors' Reflections

Airborne Combat

In cooperation with the WORLD WAR II DOCUMENTARY FILMS FOUNDATION EDUCATE. HONOR. INSPIRE.

Lieutenant Dick Winters, Camp MacKall, 1943

Toccoa & Currahee · Brecourt · Carentan
Hell's Highway · The Island · Bastogne
Foy · Haguenau · The Berghof

Spring 2015

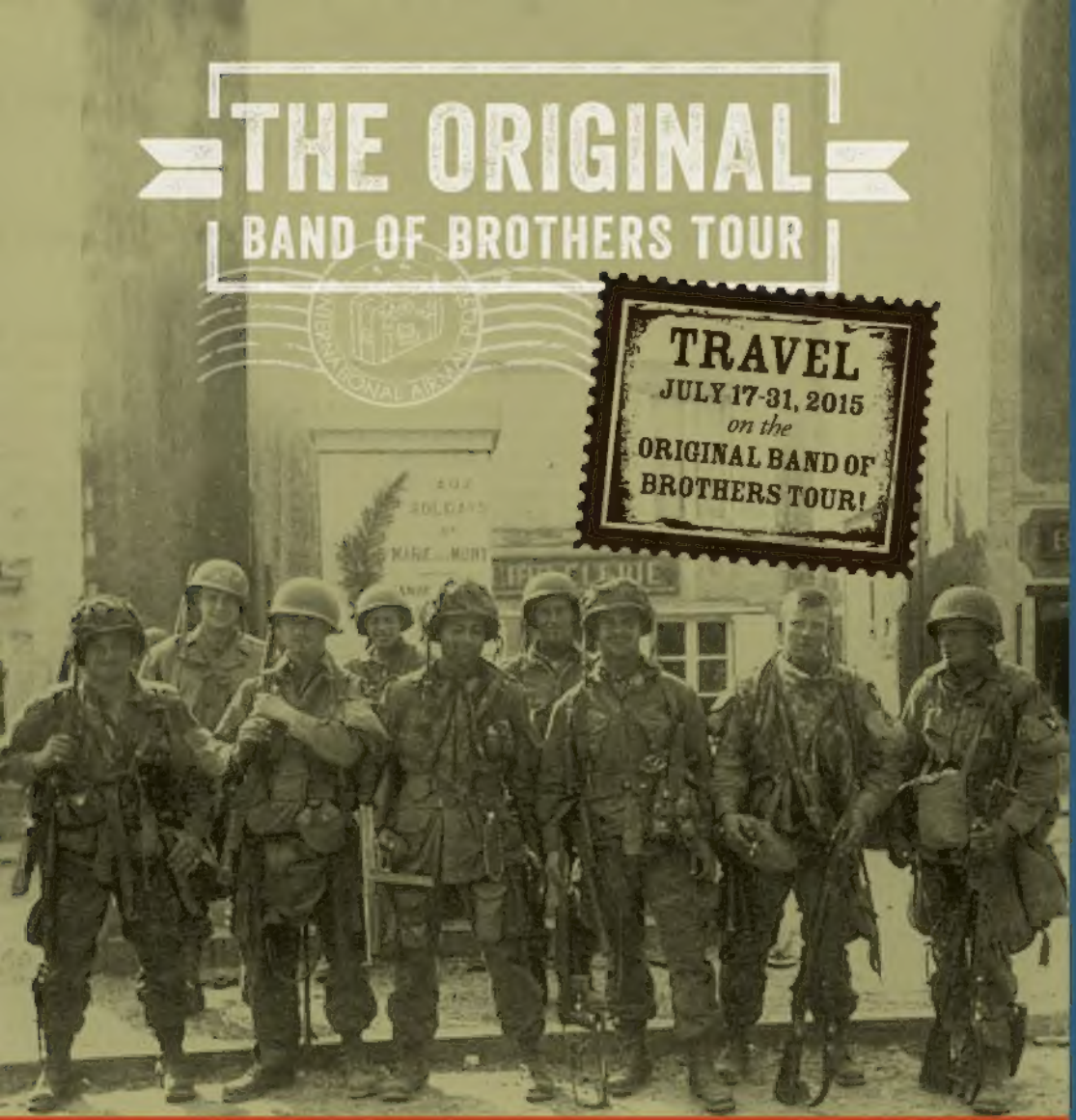
$9.99

51>

0 74470 25723 3

www.AmericaInWWII.com

THE ORIGINAL
BAND OF BROTHERS TOUR



Check out our website for The Original Band of Brothers Tour dedicated to the men of Easy Company!

BANDOFBROTHERSTOURS.NET

Travel on the only Band of Brothers Tour created by Stephen E. Ambrose, who immortalized the men of Easy Company in his best-selling book, "Band of Brothers."

No other Band of Brothers tour is based on Dr. Ambrose's personal interviews with the men of Easy Company and his extensive research.

No other Band of Brothers tour has a full-time Historian, 24/7, on the entire tour.

No other Band of Brothers tour offers our exclusive VIP experiences.

STEPHENAMBROSETOURS.COM or 1.888.903.3329

STEPHEN AMBROSE
ESTº 1979
HISTORICAL TOURS
FIRST NAME IN HISTORIC TRAVEL

"THIS TOUR IS SPECIAL. THERE IS NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT."
– Major Dick Winters, The Commander of Easy Company

BOOK YOUR DREAM TOUR!

The Original Band of Brothers Tour
May 1-15, 2015
July 17-31, 2015
September 4-18, 2015

Civil War: This Hallowed Ground
May 24-31, 2015
June 21-28, 2015
September 27 - October 4, 2015
October 18-25, 2015

D-Day Tour
June 1-13, 2015
August 7-19, 2015
September 25-October 7, 2015

Operation Overlord
June 1-9, 2015
August 7-15, 2015
September 25-October 3, 2015

In the Footsteps of Patton
June 9-20, 2015

Lewis & Clark: Undaunted Courage Tour
June 17-28, 2015

The Ghost Army: Secret War Tour
July 9-22, 2015

WWII in Poland & Germany
August 29-September 12, 2015

Italian Campaign
October 16-25, 2015

Civil War: Mississippi River Campaign
October 31-November 8, 2015

WWII and Historical Private Tours
Let us customize a tour for your group!
- Military associations
- Student and alumni groups
- Family tours

At the Front

Wear your history on the outside

Get your history on ... At the Front. Wear your own piece of WWII history like a reproduction Paratrooper Jacket, M1941, Mackinaw or a M1943 Field Jacket, just like the ones worn by the US Army during the war.

ATF is the leading retailer of high quality reproduction WWII clothing and combat gear.

Each item is painstakingly recreated, down to the smallest detail using original samples and patterns; with many items made here in the USA.

Wear a piece of history today!
Visit us online at:

www.atthefront.com

AMERICA IN WWII SPECIAL ISSUE

The Band of Brothers
FROM D-DAY TO VICTORY

4 Publisher's Welcome

5 CHAPTER ONE
Becoming the Band of Brothers
The early days of Easy Company.

20 Travels of the Band of Brothers
Map by David Deis/Dreamline Cartography

25 CHAPTER TWO
Now to War: D-Day
Easy Company prepares to play its part in the Great Crusade to save Europe.

26 Jumping into the Fire
On June 6, 1944, Easy Company's men left practice jumps behind. Leaping into the night, they plunged into chaos and fierce combat in Normandy. BY LARRY ALEXANDER

36 D-Day Casualty at the Top
The sudden loss of Easy Company's commander adds to D-day's chaos—but thrusts a worthy officer into acting command. BY JAMES COWDEN

38 Normandy Memories
Members of Easy Company reflect on D-Day, Carentan, Bloody Gulch, and the return to England.

43 CHAPTER THREE
Into Holland: Pushed Too Far
Easy makes its second and final combat jump in a bold gamble to end the war early.

50 Three Dozen Against Three Hundred
Major Dick Winters considered the all-out, fast-paced battle at a crossroads on Holland's "Island" to be his unit's finest hour. BY MAJOR DICK WINTERS WITH COLONEL COLE KINGSEED

61 CHAPTER FOUR
Bastogne: Holding the Line
Living in holes, cold and under heavy fire, Easy plays its part in the Bulge.

67 CHAPTER FIVE
Into the Alps: to the Halls of Hitler
Hunting for the Führer's alpine hideaway, Easy Company tastes the fruits of victory.

74 The Men of Easy Company
Complete Roll Call of the Band of Brothers.

76 Unsung Brothers
Meet some of Easy Company's less famous members. BY JOE MUCCIA

85 CHAPTER SIX
Into Legend
Nearly 50 years after the war, unforseen events turned Easy Company's men into celebrities. BY JOE MUCCIA

86 The Spotlight
How a book and a hit pay-TV series made Easy Company America's best-known, most documented military unit of all time. BY TOM HUNTINGTON

92 Walking in their Boots
Actors from HBO's *Band of Brothers* look back on portraying Easy Company and getting to know the unit's veterans.

96 Parting Shot
Victory party at Hitler's house.

COVER SHOT: *First Lieutenant Richard "Dick" Winters was the acting executive officer of Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry, when this photo was taken at Camp MacKall, North Carolina, in May 1943. Trouble with a rival officer would set him back. But after proving himself under fire on D-Day, he would become Easy's commander.* RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

THIS SPREAD: *Private Forrest Guth had his fellow Easy Company men sign this reserve chute at Aldbourne, England, on May 8, 1944, just shy of a month before D-Day.* D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINT-CÔME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE

PART NO. 69310-1
MFG. BY HIGHTSTOWN RUG CO.
PARACHUTE DIVISION
DATE OF MFG. JUL
1943

The Band of Brothers
FROM D-DAY TO VICTORY

A special issue of
AMERICA IN WWII *magazine*
www.AmericaInWWII.com

EDITORIAL

EDITOR & PUBLISHER
James P. Kushlan

ART AND DESIGN DIRECTOR
Jeffrey L. King

HISTORICAL CONSULTANT AND CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Joe Muccia

EDITORIAL INTERN
James Cowden

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Megan McNaughton
admin@americainwwii.com

EDITORIAL OFFICES
4711 Queen Ave., Ste. 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109
717-564-0161 (phone) 717-977-3908 (fax)

ADVERTISING

Ad Management & Production
Megan McNaughton
717-564-0161 • admaterials@americainwwii.com

CIRCULATION

Circulation and Marketing Director
Heidi T. Kushlan
717-564-0161 • hkushlan@americainwwii.com

Marketing Intern
Michael Momose

A Publication of
310 PUBLISHING, LLC

Copyright ©2015 by 310 Publishing LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without prior written permission of the publisher. *The Band of Brothers: From D-Day to Victory* and *America in WWII* magazine do not endorse and are not responsible for the content of advertisements that appear herein.

Printed in the USA by The Ovid Bell Press
Distributed by Curtis Circulation Company

Love the story of WWII? Look for

America in WWII magazine
The War • The Home Front • The People
On print & digital newsstands or online at
www.AmericaInWWII.com/subscriptions
Toll-free 866-525-1945 for print subscriptions

Your connection to World War II America.

Hate and Gratitude

RICHARD D WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

THERE'S NO GETTING ALONG WITH SOME PEOPLE. America's citizen soldiers in World War II found *that* out. Draftees and recruits rounded up from across a continent inevitably had personality clashes, culture clashes, even knuckle clashes.

In that regard, Easy Company in the 506th Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion was much like other units. What was different was that Easy's men had volunteered to be paratroopers. Airborne units were elite and demanding. Staying in long enough to earn your wings was hard. That gave Easy's men something in common.

Training at Georgia's Camp Toccoa, Easy men found kindred spirits and formed close bonds at the squad and platoon level. Officers found support and friendship with their peers. But one person few got along with was Captain Herbert M. Sobel of Chicago, Illinois.

Not only was Sobel the first man to join Easy Company, he was its commander. And he seemed perfectly willing to be hated and friendless, ruling Easy with a discipline so harsh that even good men broke.

First Lieutenant Richard D. Winters reached his limit with Sobel in October 1943 in Aldbourne, England, where Easy was awaiting D-Day. As 2nd Platoon leader and then as the company's acting executive officer, Winters had chafed under Sobel's arbitrary fault-finding and punishment. He despised Sobel for the way he treated the men. When Sobel attempted to chastise Winters for a fabricated transgression (failure to inspect a latrine on time), Winters requested a court-martial.

By February 1944 the conflict (including a "mutiny" by Easy's sergeants, who handed back their stripes rather than serve under Sobel) led to Sobel's reassignment. It could have led to Winters's dismissal; instead, he reverted to 1st Platoon leader.

When Sobel's replacement, First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan III, died in a D-Day plane crash, Winters assumed command of Easy Company. If Sobel was Easy's most hated commander, Winters became its most loved.

Winters never stopped disliking Sobel. He drew the mustache on the photo of Sobel above. But even Winters had to admit that Sobel's rigorous training and strict discipline had born fruit. Easy company held up in combat, achieving objectives under the direst circumstances. Easy officers moved up to battalion and regimental positions.

As Winters wrote, "Despite his personal shortcomings, Sobel drove each member of the company to become an elite soldier.... In that sense, Herbert Maxwell Sobel 'made' Easy Company by producing a combat company that acted with a single-minded purpose."

In this issue, we've worked to convey Easy Company's exceptional unity of purpose *and* the diversity of its men. To help, we've assembled as many images and artifacts as we could fit in 100 pages, together with first-person material. Thanks to the World War II Foundation and to contributing editor Joe Muccia for helping with that.

Easy Company didn't win the war alone. But the detail and completeness of its story—from formation through apotheosis—offers the clearest view so far of a group of men who fought at the extreme front in Europe. We hope you'll enjoy our coverage.

Jim Kushlan

Jim Kushlan
Publisher, *America in WWII* magazine

BECOMING THE Band of Brothers

The Early Days of Easy Company

What made men apply for the parachute infantry, a brand of soldiering that combined the dangers of flying through flak, jumping from airplanes, and fighting fiercely behind enemy lines?

For some, it was extra pay. Paratroopers got $50 more each month, and their officers got double that. For Richard D. Winters of Pennsylvania's Lancaster County it was something else. He first encountered paratroopers during officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Georgia. "Airborne troopers," he would write in his memoirs, "looked like I had always pictured a group of soldiers: hard, lean, bronzed, and tough. When they walked down the street, they appeared to be a proud and cocky bunch exhibiting a tolerant scorn for anyone who was not airborne. So I took it in my head that I'd like to work with a bunch of men of that caliber."

As a new second lieutenant in August 1942, Winters reported to Camp Toccoa in Georgia's northeast corner, where the new 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment was forming. He became a platoon leader in Company E—Easy Company—in the 506th's 2nd Battalion. By the time the 506th left Toccoa, he was Easy's acting executive officer.

Most men couldn't weather Toccoa's rigors. But in Easy Company, Winters, 6 other officers, and 140 enlisted men did. They went on to make history. ★

CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK, 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

COURTESY OF THE RADER FAMILY VIA MARCUS BROTHERTON

AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

CURRAHEE!

Top: Camped on a march, Easy Company's Robert Rader is what Georgia's Camp Toccoa aimed for: a soldier in peak condition. Above: Trainees ran Toccoa's Mount Currrahee "three up, three down" (miles, that is). "Currahee" ("stands alone" in Cherokee) became the 506th Parachute Infantry motto. Left: A 506th scrapbook cartoon shows what trainees thought about on "problems," or field exercises: food. But Easy spent Thanksgiving 1942 crawling through hog entrails to simulate carnage, bullets overhead.

CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK: 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

THE RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

WHERE RECRUITS BECAME PARATROOPERS

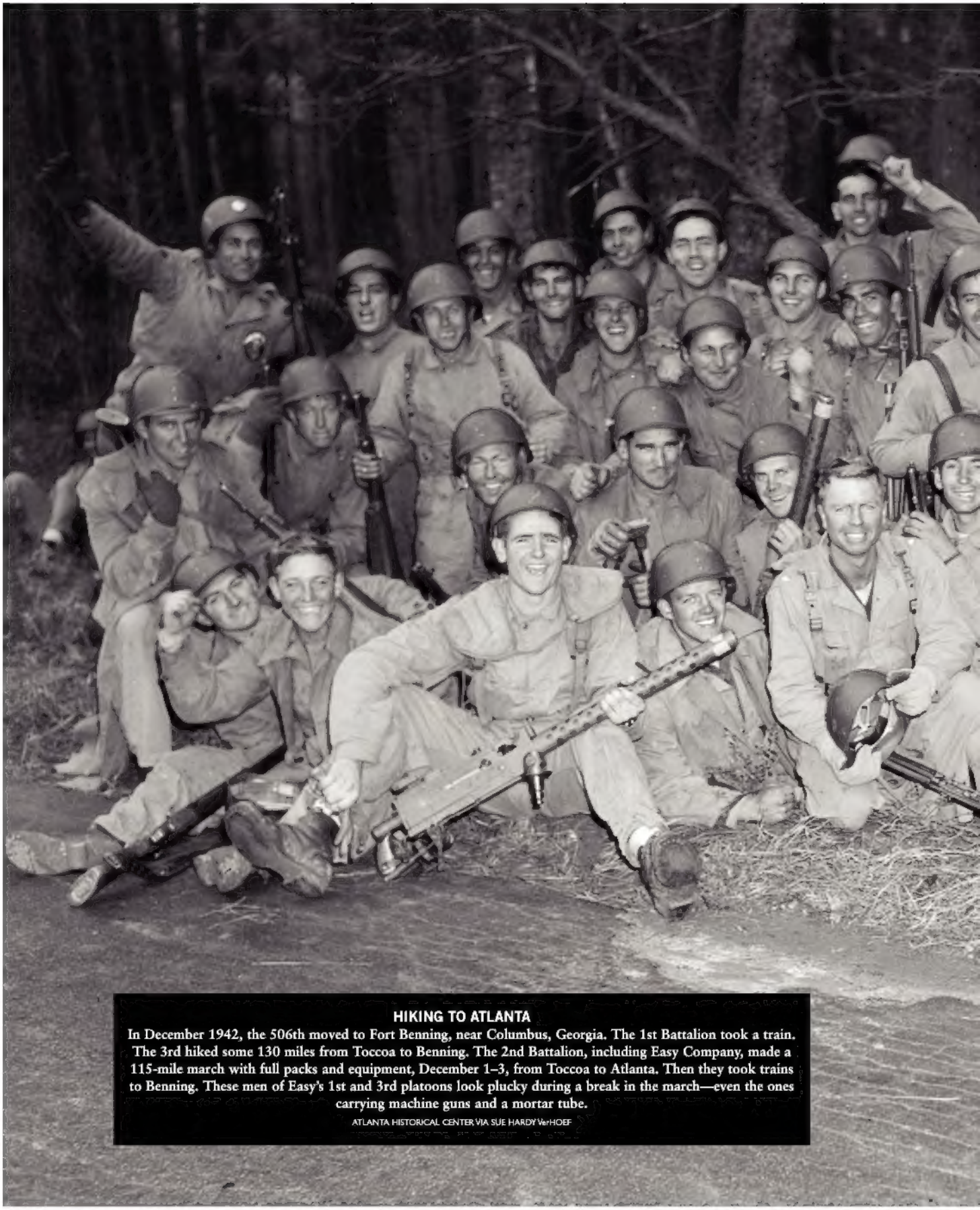
Above, left: A GI painting of Mount Currahee, with its observation tower at the summit. Above, right: What looks like a real jump is actually from a simulated fuselage at Camp Toccoa. The jumper is Lieutenant Richard D. Winters, 2nd Platoon leader and later acting executive officer of the 506th's Easy Company at Toccoa. Below: Fresh from a three-day field problem, 3rd Platoon Easy men Walter Gordon and Cecil Pace pose with their machine gun outside barracks at Camp Toccoa.

COURTESY OF AMOS "BUCK" TAYLOR VIA JOE MUCCIA

COURTESY OF EILEEN O'HARA

SINK'S MUSCLE COLLEGE

Grinning for the camera, Easy Company's Warren "Skip" Muck climbs the cargo net on Toccoa's obstacle course, the devilry of Colonel Robert F. Sink of the 506th. The course knocked men out of the paratrooper program. Muck wears a General Headquarters Reserve sleeve patch because the 506th was not yet assigned to a division.



HIKING TO ATLANTA

In December 1942, the 506th moved to Fort Benning, near Columbus, Georgia. The 1st Battalion took a train. The 3rd hiked some 130 miles from Toccoa to Benning. The 2nd Battalion, including Easy Company, made a 115-mile march with full packs and equipment, December 1–3, from Toccoa to Atlanta. Then they took trains to Benning. These men of Easy's 1st and 3rd platoons look plucky during a break in the march—even the ones carrying machine guns and a mortar tube.

ATLANTA HISTORICAL CENTER VIA SUE HARDY VerHOEF

ATLANTA JOURNAL–CONSTITUTION VIA THE 506th INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

ATLANTA HISTORICAL CENTER VIA SUE HARDY VerHOEF

THE LONG ROAD TO FORT BENNING

Top: Easy mascot Draftee rides with machine-gunner Dewitt Lowery on the Atlanta march. Above: Lieutenant Winters (left, with M1 carbine) and other marchers mug for an *Atlanta Journal–Constitution* photo. Below: Easy hikes to Benning from its train. Elmer Murray carries the guidon. Captain Herbert Sobel, Easy's commander, stands apart. Opposite: Easy Company Private Forrest Guth mentioned the Atlanta march in a letter to students back home in South Whitehall, Pennsylvania.

ATLANTA HISTORICAL CENTER VIA SUE HARDY VerHOEF

Fort Benning, Georgia

[illegible]

[illegible] Wilson,

I don't know where I was used to give a description of our training or how to read it so I will try to give you a rough idea of what we did and are going to do.

Camping with [illegible] Company was just a small portion of Training. The first 13 weeks we spent at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. It was a new camp and not quite finished when we moved in. While here we received a conditioning course and our basic training. Every day we ran 7 miles up a mountain and back. This mountain was the worst we've yet had to [illegible]. The adopted it as our [illegible] slogan "Currahee". After our training at Camp Toccoa we moved to Fort Benning, where we spent 200 miles on foot. The first 15 miles we marched with full packs, overnight [illegible] this

COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINTE-COME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE

INTO THE "FRYING PAN"

Above, left: A wartime postcard from Fort Benning. Above, right: Easy spent Christmas 1942 there. This was the menu for the 2nd Battalion's Christmas dinner. Opposite: At Benning, Easy's enlisted men trained in a bare area dubbed the Frying Pan. Then they earned their wings by making five jumps like the one in this image from the 506th scrapbook (the officers had made their jumps at Toccoa). Below: It was the fulfillment of what began at Toccoa, where they practiced parachute techniques without parachutes.

LEFT & ABOVE: *CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK, 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942- 4 JULY 1945*

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

READY FOR A JUMP

After earning their wings, the Easy Company men kept training and making practice jumps. Trooper Jerry Wentzel is ready for one such jump at Camp MacKall in North Carolina, where Easy moved in February 1943. Everything he'll need is tied to his body, including the entrenching tool tied to his leg.

COURTESY OF RUDOLPH TATAY

BUDDIES AT CAMP MACKALL

Privates Alex Penkala (left) and Warren Muck, both Easy Company mortar men, goof around near Camp MacKall's tarpaper barracks. They would one day serve on the same mortar team, and would be killed together in the same foxhole by a direct enemy artillery hit near Foy, Belgium, on January 10, 1945.

COURTESY OF AMOS "BUCK" TAYLOR VIA JOE MUCCIA

BEFORE REAL WAR, WAR GAMES

Practice jumps offered chances to work out problems that could hamper later combat missions. The jumps had risks—but no *real* flak, no *real* bullets, and no *real* enemies. Below: Men of the 506th's 2nd Battalion board a C-47 Skytrain for a practice jump. The football-style helmets indicate an early jump. Opposite: Later jumps included combat gear and were often intended to simulate battle conditions. Above: The Tennessee Maneuvers—massive army exercises across parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana June 5–July 15, 1943—included paratroopers and gliders. They were the most combat-realistic experience Easy Company would have before leaving the states. This plane is taking off with a stick of paratroopers from the 506th's 2nd Battalion in June during the maneuvers.

THE RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

BELOW: RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

RICHARD M. "RED" WRIGHT PATCH COURTESY OF DAN POTTER

READY FOR ACTION

Shared experience made the 506th—the "Five-O-Sink"—a tight unit. Above: Men wore a "Pair-O-Dice" jacket patch, a black 0 linking dice showing 5 and 6. Left: 3rd Platoon Easy men at Camp MacKall (from left): front—Clarence Tridle, Elmer Schuyler, Wayne Sisk, Lavon Reese, Darrell Powers; middle—Terrence Harris, Carl Fenstermaker, Paul Rogers, Ken Baldwin, Carwood Lipton, Cecil Pace, Forrest Guth; and back—James Alley. Below: Easy in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. In September '43, Easy sailed for England.

EASY COMPANY, FORT BRAGG, SEPT. 1943

(all from left) **Front:** Sgt. Amos J. Taylor; Sgt. Robert T. Smith; Sgt. C. Carwood Lipton, Sgt. Robert J. Rader; S.Sgt. James L. Diel*; 1st Sgt. William S. Evans*; Lt. Frederick T. Heyliger; Lt. Richard D. Winters; Lt. Warren R. Roush; S.Sgt. Terrence C. Harris*; S.Sgt. Myron Ranney; Sgt. John W. Martin; S.Sgt. Murray B. Roberts*; Sgt. Leo D. Boyle. **Row 2, Left Side:** Gordon F. Carson; Edward J. Donahue; Coburn M. Johnson, Edward J. Joint; Richard F. Berg. **Row 2, Right Side:** William A. Howell; Denver Randleman; T/4 Robert B. Smith; Roy W. Cobb; Edward J. Bernat. **Row 3:** James D. Campbell*; Philip P. Perugini; Edward F. Sabo; David E. Morris, Vernon J. Menze*; Maxwell M. Clark; Herman E. Hanson; Roderick G. Bain, Roy E. Pickel; Elmer N. Schuyler; Wayne A. Sisk; William H. Wagner; Kenneth J. Webb; Eugene E. Jackson*; William H. Woodcock; Alexander Vitorre; Joachim Melo; Sergio G. Moya*; Walter H. Wentzel, John P. Sheeley; T/5 Ralph H. Wimer*; Thomas A. McCreary; Arthur C. Youman; Edward J. Tipper; T/5 Herman F. Collins*; William H. Dukeman, Jr.*; Carl Riggs*; Donald J. Moone; John McGrath; Walter L. McKay; John G. Mayer. **Row 4:** Arthur J. Mauzerall; T/5 Jerry A. Wentzel*; Richard R. Garrod; Robert Van Klinken*; William S. Metzler; Donald B. Hoobler; Charles E. Grant; Salvatore Frank Bellino; Edward A. Mauser; Alexander Raczkowski; John Plesha, Jr.; Richard P. Davenport; Everett J. Gray*; Robert A. Mann; Thomas H. Burgess; Jack F. Matthews; Darrell C. Powers, Robert E. Wynn; Walter S. Gordon, Jr.; Gordon Nuenfeldt, William F. Kiehn*; Genoa H. Griffith; John Lee Eubanks; William T. McGonigal, Jr.*; Lavon P. Reese; Campbell T. Smith; Bradford C. Freeman; Daniel B. West; Robert J. Bloser*; Albert Blithe; Woodrow W. Robbins. **Row 5:** Joseph M. Jordan*; Richard L. Bray; Robert K. Marsh; Alex M. Penkala, Jr.*; Earl V. Bruce; T/5 George Luz; John N. Miller*; Frank J. Perconte; Benjamin J. Stoney*; Joseph D. Toye; Warren H. Muck*; Donald G. Malarkey; John L. Sheehy; J. B. Stokes; Paul E. Lamoureux; unknown; Gerald R. Snider*; John F. Fieguth; Cleveland O. Petty; Roderick G. Strohl; Carl L. Fenstermaker; Paul C. Rogers; Joseph E. Hogan; Robert T. Leonard; Forrest L. Guth; Earl J. McClung; James A. McMahon; Lewis Lampos; Joseph D. Liebgott; Francis J. Mellett*; Clarence M. Tridle **Not shown:** Capt. Herbert M. Sobel, Sgt. William J. Guarnere

***Killed in action**

Travels of the Band of Brothers

Easy Company at War

Company E | 2nd Battalion | 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment | 101st Airborne Division

1942–1945

1942

1. **Camp Toccoa, Georgia**
   Aug.–Nov. 1942

2. **Camp Toccoa to Atlanta, Georgia**
   march with full equipment
   Dec. 1–3, 1942

3. **Fort Benning, Georgia**
   the Currahees get their wings
   Dec. 1942–Feb. 1943

1943

4. **Camp MacKall, North Carolina**
   Feb.–May 1943

5. **Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky**
   end ng point of maneuvers in Kentucky and Tennessee
   Jun. 1943

6. **Fort Bragg, North Carolina**
   Jul.–Aug. 1943

7. **Camp Shanks, New York**
   Sept. 1943

8. **Weehawken, New Jersey**
   Easy Company boards SS *Samana* for Eng and
   early Sept. 1943

9. **Liverpool, England**
   Sept. 15, 1943

10. **Aldbourne, England**
    in residence awaiting D-Day
    Sept. 1943–May 29, 1944

1944

11. **Upottery Airfield, England**
    awaiting takeoff for D-Day jump
    May 29–Jun. 5, 1944

12. **Normandy, France**
    air cross.ng and D-Day combat jump into Normandy
    Jun. 6, 1944

13. **Carentan, France**
    closing in, clearing, and holding the town
    Jun. 8–29, 1944

14. **Utah Beach, Normandy, France**
    ready to return to Eng and
    Jul. 10–11, 1944

15. **Southampton, England**
    back from Normandy by ship
    Jul. 12, 1944

16. **Aldbourne, England**
    Jul. 13–Sept. 10, 1944

17. **Membury Airfield, England**
    Sept. 10–17, 1944

18. **Zon, Holland**
    Operation Market Garden combat jump
    Sept. 17, 1944

DREAMLINE CARTOGRAPHY/DAVID DEIS

1945

19. **Eindhoven area, Holland**
Sept. 17–26, 1944

20. **"The Island," Holland**
Oct. 2–24, 1944

21. **Arnhem area, Holland**
Oct. 24–Nov. 28, 1944

22. **Mourmelon-le-Grand, France**
rest, refit, replacements, and visits to Paris
Dec. 1–17, 1944

23. **Foy, Belgium**
helping hold besieged Bastogne during Battle of the Bulge
Dec. 19, 1944–Jan. 13, 1945

24. **Noville, Belgium**
clearing Germans from the town
Jan. 14–15, 1945

25. **Rachamps, Belgium**
liberating the town
Jan. 16–18, 1945

26. **Haguenau, France**
continuing pressure on the Germans
Feb. 5–20, 1945

27. **Mourmelon, France**
Feb. 25–Apr. 1, 1945

28. **Rhine River, Düsseldorf, Germany**
Apr. 1–22, 1945

29. **Buchloe, Germany**
Easy Company encounters a concentration camp
Apr. 29–31, 1945

30. **Thalham, Germany**
May 3–4, 1945

31. **Berchtesgaden, Germany**
occupying Hitler's Alpine getaway
May 5–8, 1945

32. **Kaprun, Austria**
occupation duty; men with enough points start heading home
May 9–July 31, 1945

33. **Joigny, France**
men continue heading home based on points; Easy Company ceases to exist with deactivation of 101st Airborne Div. on Nov. 30
Aug. 1–Nov. 30, 1945

AFRICA

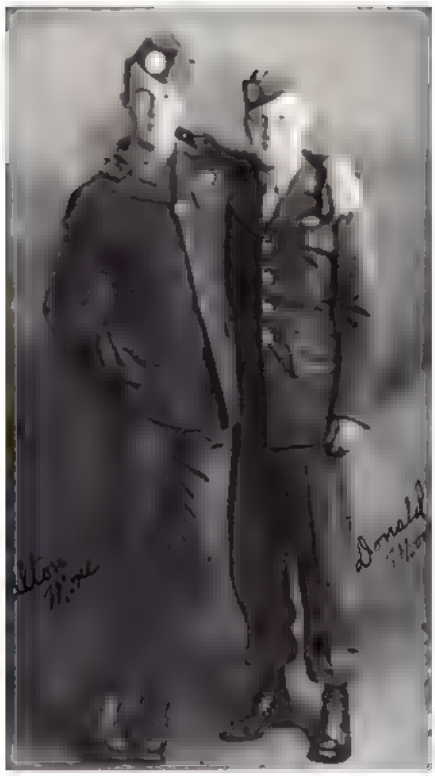
CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

DROP ZONE: JOLLY OLD ENGLAND

A 506th trooper lands on a British farm during a practice jump in late 1943 or early 1944. After crossing "the Pond" aboard the SS *Samaria*, the 506th was based in southern England. Drill, field problems, and practice jumps continued. But the men had access to towns (including London, on a pass), with pubs and young women.

BRADFORD FREEMAN VIA JOE MUCCIA

RICHARD D WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA



COURTESY OF THE MAUSER FAMILY VIA JOE MUCCIA

EASY MEN IN ENGLAND

There was more to do in England than in the rural American South where Easy Company had trained. The men dove in. Above, left and right: A popular diversion was to go to London, have fun, and get your picture taken. From left, these Easy men in London are Bradford Freeman, J.B. Stokes, and Lewis "Bob" Lampos, of the 2nd Platoon; and Alton More with Donald Moone. Above, center: In England, the Easy men saw they were part of an international alliance. On March 23, 1944, Lieutenant Winters jumped in a demonstration for British Prime Minister Winston Churchill by the 506th's 2nd and 3rd Battalions and the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion. The 22 on Winters's helmet indicates his stick (the planeload of men he will jump with).

COURTESY OF RODGE DOWSON

HOME—AND HOTBED OF CONFLICT

Aldbourne was Easy's home in England. St. Michael's Church there dated from 1200 or earlier. In Aldbourne, tension between Winters and Easy commander Captain Herbert Sobel came to a head. Winters was demoted from executive officer to platoon commander. Easy's sergeants were chastised for mutiny. But Sobel was transferred.

COURTESY OF IAN GARDNER

CURRAHEES IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

A placard at the main gate of Littlecote Manor bears the "Currahee" coat of arms of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, marking the unit's headquarters in Littlecote, England. Aldbourne, home of Easy Company, was about seven miles away. The Yank paratroopers had become a significant presence in the county of Wiltshire.

NOW TO WAR: D-Day

Easy Company prepares to play its part in the Great Crusade to save Europe.

Finally, the time had come. On May 29, 1944, army trucks rumbled into Aldbourne. Easy Company marched to the square and boarded the trucks, watched by townsfolk who had become attached to their Yank guests. The trucks lurched forward, and Easy Company was gone.

Driving about 100 miles southwest, to East Devon, England, the trucks stopped at Upottery Airfield, named for the closest village. Originally Up Ottery, the town along the Ottery River was a place steeped in history; the village's Church of St. Mary the Virgin dated from the 1100s. Near this ancient place on the night of June 5, 1944, thousands of engines would roar, perhaps the loudest sound ever heard there.

For the Easy men, the days at Upottery were filled with speeches, briefings, and anxious waiting. No one knew when the order to load up would come—not even the Supreme Allied Commander. General Dwight Eisenhower was consulting regularly with weathermen, trying to make the hardest decision of his life.

On June 4, the order came. Easy suited up and started loading its Douglas C-47 Skytrains. Then another order came: not tonight. The next afternoon, it was on again. The Easy men were on their planes by 10:15 P.M. By 11:10 or shortly afterward they were in the air, on schedule to jump near Sainte-Marie-du-Mont on France's Cotentin Peninsula around 1:20 A.M. ★

EAGLES ATTACK
Screaming Eagles—that was how the 101st Airborne Division saw itself, dropping from the sky onto its prey. Easy Company men wore the division's patch proudly. Below: Men of Easy Company's parent 506th Parachute Infantry head to their planes at England's Upottery Airfield on June 5, 1944, to load up for the D-Day jump into Normandy. These are 3rd Battalion men.

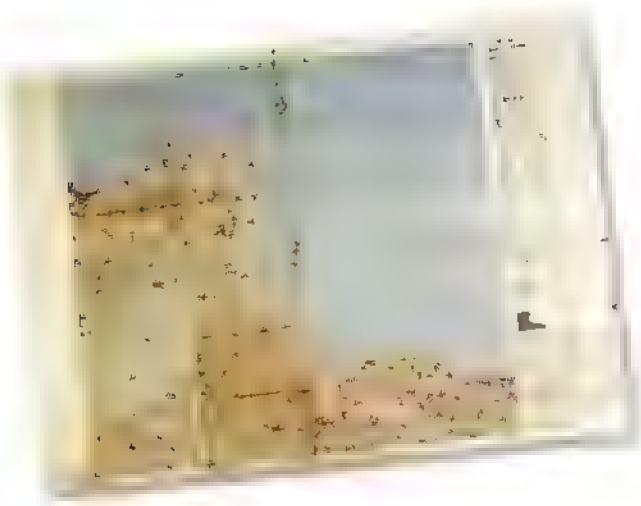
RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

ABOVE: RAMRAS COLLECTION

JUMPING
Into The Fire

On June 6, 1944, Easy Company's men left practice jumps behind. Leaping into the night, they plunged into chaos and fierce combat in Normandy.

by Larry Alexander



MAP FOR THE LOST
Most Easy Company paratroopers landed off-target on D-Day. Corporal Forrest Guth had this map with him when he landed by a hedgerow near Ravenouville, lost and alone.

First Lieutenant Richard D. Winters squatted amid the tangled underbrush of a Norman hedgerow, part of a farm known as Brecourt Manor. His attention was focused on another line of trees, where four German 105mm artillery pieces lay hidden. The guns were situated so they could pour fire on the American landing beach code-named Utah, just three miles to the north. At that moment, US troops of the 4th Infantry Division were wading ashore as the Allied liberation of France got underway.

It was Tuesday morning, June 6, 1944—D-Day—and Winters could hear the dull rumble of gunfire coming from the beach. But the landing was not his concern at the moment. His problem, and a big one at that, was this gun battery defended by God alone-knew-how-many Germans.

The role of the paratroopers jumping into France this day was to seize and hold causeways leading from the beaches so the infantry could roll inland. The battery of guns at Brecourt Manor controlled one such causeway and Winters, executive officer of Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 101st Airborne Division, had been assigned to knock it out.

Winters, an aggressive leader with a keen tactical mind, quickly formulated an attack plan, then crept back to the nearby farm village of Le Grand Chemin where his men waited.

Like nearly every other airborne unit on D-Day, Easy had missed its assigned jump zone. Its men were scattered across the French countryside like dandelion seeds in the wind. Easy's commander, First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan, was one of the many men still missing, so the job of leading the attack fell to Winters. Easy's roster carried 139 names, but as Winters gathered his men around him, he could count just 12: Second Lieutenant Lynn "Buck" Compton; sergeants Carwood Lipton, Joe Toye, and Bill Guarnere; corporals Don Malarkey and Robert "Popeye" Wynn; and privates Mike Ranney, Cleveland O. Petty, Joseph D. Liebgott, Walter Hendrix, John Plesha Jr., and Private Gerald Lorraine, a jeep driver for the regiment's commander, Colonel Robert O. Sink, who volunteered to join the assault.

Winters's plan called for a double envelopment. Sending Compton, Malarkey, Lipton, Toye, Lorraine, Wynn, and Ranney along one hedgerow, he led the rest along another. Winters directed his two machine guns, Petty and Liebgott on one, and Hendrix and Plesha on the second, to cover the assault by laying down a base of fire.

"Lipton, you and Ranney move to the right and secure that flank," Winters told them. "Lip, you have a demolition kit in that musette bag, right?" Lipton nodded. "When you see we've taken the first gun, bring it up fast."

OPPOSITE: COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER SAINT-COME-DU-MONT NORMANDY FRANCE

CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942-4 JULY 1945

LEAPING INTO THE UNKNOWN

The 506th's war album represents D-Day's jump with this image. After a tense flight across the Channel, troopers relied on endlessly-practiced routine. They stood and hooked a strap that would pull out their chutes onto a wire along the plane's interior. As a light by the door alternated red to green, men jumped one by one.

Winters turned to Compton. "Buck, Malarkey, Popeye. Get close to that machine gun and put grenades on it. Then we all run like mad for the trench. Speed is everything. We've got to hit them hard and fast, and get into that trench before they can react. Then we'll concentrate on the first gun, take it, then go after the rest one by one. OK, drop everything except your weapons and ammo. Stay alert. Follow me."

The attack went with textbook precision. With Easy's machine guns forcing the Germans to keep their heads down, Compton led his men forward, tossing grenades at the Germans as they charged.

"Come on! Follow me!" Winters yelled, and leaped to his feet, the others close behind.

The exploding grenades knocked out a German MG-42 machine gun and its crew, but bullets from the enemy trench and the machine guns positioned one hedgerow to the south buzzed around the Americans like hornets. The Easy Company men reached the trench, but not before Wynn was hit in the behind by a bullet. As he lay on the ground bleeding, all Popeye could do was apologize to Winters.

a burst that struck the wounded man yet failed to kill him.

"Hilfe! Hilfe!" the wounded German called over and over, yelling for help.

Winters turned to Malarkey, who'd just caught up, and said, "Finish him." As Malarkey carried out the order, a fourth German jumped from the trench and ran for the distant hedgerow. Winters took careful aim and fired. The fleeing man fell. Only about 20 seconds had elapsed since Easy Company had gained the trench. Winters spotted two Germans trying to set up a machine gun in the trench and shot them both.

He now turned his attention to the second gun.

"Put fire on that position," Winters told Compton and Toye.

Their weapons immediately blazed to life. Suddenly Malarkey leaped out of the trench and raced toward the German bodies sprawled in the field. Malarkey had wanted a Luger as a souvenir and thought he'd seen one on one of the dead men.

"I told him to come back, this area is lousy with Krauts," Winters recalled.

Luck was with Malarkey. The Germans let up their fire, possi-

COURTESY OF TRACY COMPTON

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COURTESY OF THE GUARNERE FAMILY

BELOW: WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION

PUTTING EASY BACK TOGETHER

Easy's men were scattered. Some had lost the M1 carbine (above) issued to most of them. But Easy had a critical mission: to secure a causeway from Utah Beach so GIs landing on the shore could get inland. As Easy men found one another, Lieutenant Richard Winters (top center) gathered them for combat. Easy's commander, First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan III, was missing, so 1st Platoon leader Winters was in charge. Soon, Winters received orders to eliminate German guns trained on the causeway. He headed to Brecourt Manor farm with just 12 men, among them Second Lieutenant Lynn "Buck" Compton (top left) and Sergeant William "Wild Bill" Guarnere (top right).

"I'm sorry, sir. I goofed," he cried. "I messed up. I'm sorry, lieutenant."

"Imagine that," Winters told this writer in 2003. "He was lying there, wounded, and yet all he could think about was apologizing to me. It was beautiful."

The first German gun quickly fell to the hard-charging Americans. Three Germans sprang from the trench and ran toward their comrades in the opposite tree line.

"Nail 'em," Winters yelled and swung his rifle up to his shoulder.

His Garand bucked and a single round caught one man in the back of the head. A burst from Lorraine's Thompson killed a second German, but Guarnere missed his man. Winters raised his rifle, fired, and hit the fleeing soldier in the back. Guarnere let loose with

bly mistaking him for a medic. Malarkey reached the dead man only to find the "Luger" was in fact a gunsight for one of the 105s. Malarkey raced madly back to the trench as bullets chewed angrily at the ground near his feet. In the trench, Guarnere and others laid down a covering fire.

Winters assigned three men to hold the first 105 and moved the rest closer to the second, keeping low to avoid enemy fire still coming from the opposing hedgerow. On Winters's signal, the Americans attacked, firing their weapons and tossing grenades. The enemy fled except for six men who approached the Americans, hands over their heads, saying in stilted English, "No make me dead!"

After a delay caused in part by Lipton stopping to apply sulfa powder to Wynn's wounded backside, Lipton and Ranney finally

PHOTO BY JOE MUCCIA

EASY'S FIRST COMBAT

At Brecourt, the Germans had four 105mm guns along this tree line, with a foot-deep trench that let them crawl from gun to gun. Under machine-gun cover, Winters led an attack on both flanks. The fight took hours and included the bringing up of reinforcements, ammunition, and explosives, but Easy men disabled all four guns.

caught up to Winters. But Lipton soon realized he'd left the demolition kit, with the explosives, fuses and percussion caps, in his musette bag back at the road where the men had dumped their excess gear. Embarrassed, he crawled away to retrieve the bag.

As Winters turned his attention to the third gun, help arrived in the form of two men. One he did not recognize. The other was Private First Class John D. Halls of the 2nd Battalion's 81mm Mortar Platton. Winters, who had coached the regiment's basketball team back in England, recognized Halls as one of his players.

In taking the first two guns, Winters and his men had made one concerted push each time, moving rapidly through the trench with the always-aggressive Guarnere leading the way. To take this third gun, Winters opted for a quick three-pronged attack. Halls would charge ahead inside the trench while Winters, Compton, and Guarnere attacked on the outside. On Winters's signal, the four men were off, firing as they ran. Guarnere sprayed the emplacement with his Tommy gun, killing several of the crew. Six more Germans surrendered as the gun fell, but Halls was killed.

While examining this third gun emplacement Winters discovered a command center equipped with radio and direction-finding equipment. Poking through the papers left behind by the fleeing enemy, he discovered a map denoting gun positions. It took just a few moments for Winters to realize this map pinpointed artillery and machine gun emplacements all over the Cotentin Peninsula. Winters sent the map, along with a request for reinforcements and much needed ammo, back to Le Grand Chemin. After a lengthy wait and receiving no reply, Winters decided to go back in person to plead his case.

In the village Winters found his battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Strayer, and his staff sitting unconcernedly, studying the captured documents. Tired, sweaty, and with the adrenaline of battle pumping through his blood, the sight of his commanding officer's seeming indifference while he and his men were engaged in a desperate fight, caused the usually soft-spoken Winters to erupt.

"Goddamit," he yelled at the officers who stared at him, mouths agape. "When I send for ammunition and help, I mean now! Not when you get around to it!"

None of them had ever seen Winters so angry nor heard him swear, but it elicited the desired result. Bandoliers of ammo were

PHOTO FROM FORREST GUTH VIA JOE MUCCIA

A TOAST TO THE LIBERATORS

From left, Easy Company men Corporal Forrest Guth and Staff Sergeant Floyd Talbert and an unidentified paratrooper of the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion accept the wine and gratitude of war-weary French civilians near the small village of Ravenouville on D-Day morning.

suddenly being heaped on him. Second Lieutenant Ronald Speirs of D Company promised to bring reinforcements, and said he himself would bring explosives

Private Len Hicks of F Company heard the exchange and offered his help.

"Okay, Hicks," Winters told him. "See if anyone else from Fox Company wants to come along and bring them."

With assurances that help was coming, Winters returned to his men.

When the promised TNT arrived, Winters slipped explosives down the barrels of the three captured guns, detonating them with incendiary grenades. (He did not use German potato-masher grenades as depicted in the HBO miniseries. "Hollywood thought that was more dramatic," he told this writer.)

Speirs arrived, bringing along Hicks and Sergeant Julian "Rusty" Houch (F Company's clerk) along with privates Jumbo DiMarzio, Ray Taylor, and another man. They immediately set about knocking out the fourth gun. Houch and Hicks crawled through the grass toward the Germans. Houch rose to throw a grenade but was killed by German fire. The aggressive Speirs rose up and led his men forward. Hicks fell, a bullet through his leg, and a second man was wounded. Speirs leaped into the gun pit alone, causing the startled Germans to flee. Speirs cut them down with fire from his Tommy gun.

After dispatching this gun as they had the other three with TNT and a grenade, and with ammo running low, Winters decided his job was done. It was time to leave.

The fight at Brecourt had taken about three hours, during which Winters's small band had attacked a position held by about 50 well-entrenched Germans of the 6th Battery, 90th Regiment. Fifteen enemy had been killed and 12 captured and all four 105s destroyed. Winters listed his losses as two wounded and four dead, though he later learned that a man in Speirs's group whom he thought had been killed had in fact survived.

For the action at Brecourt, Winters nominated Guarnere for a Distinguished Service Cross, which Strayer downgraded to the Silver Star. Compton, Lorraine, and Toye also received the Silver Star. Lipton, Malarkey, Ranney, Liebgott, Hendrix, Plesha, Petty, and Wynn each received the Bronze Star.

Sink told Winters he was putting him in for the Medal of Honor, but there is no written evidence that he ever did so. Instead Winters received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Elsewhere on D-Day

EVEN AS WINTERS and his men assaulted Brecourt, other Easy members, scattered by the air drop, were trying to find the company.

Corporal Forrest Guth had landed by a hedgerow near the town of Ravenouville. "I was by myself for five, six or eight min-

PHOTO FROM FORREST GUTH VIA JOE MUK CIA

MAKING THEIR WAY TO EASY

By June 7, Guth had found several other Easy Company men. In Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, they lined up for a photo in front of the town's World War I memorial, with some 4th Division GIs behind them. From left, the Easy men are Guth, Francis Mellet, David Morris, Daniel West, Talbert, and Campbell Smith.

utes before I found the first guy," he told this writer in 2008.

That "first guy" was his buddy Walter "Smokey" Gordon, who up until that moment thought he was "the only SOB in the ETO." Within minutes more members of Guth's stick of paratroopers caught up, including John "Georgia Jap" Eubanks, Floyd Talbert, Ed Tipper, Campbell T. Smith, and Francis Mellet. This small band stumbled across Major John P. Stopka, executive officer of the 3rd Battalion, 502nd PIR, who was organizing a scratch unit to defend a crossroad at Marmion Farm. The Easy men helped hold the farm for 24 hours until infantry coming in from nearby Utah Beach reached them. Then they set off for Sainte-Marie-du-Mont in search of Easy.

Leaving the D14 road and cutting cross-country, Guth and the others came across the smoldering remains of a C-47 transport plane that had been shot down in the early hours of D-Day, crashing into a farm field. Dead men and scorched equipment lay scattered. Heat still radiating from the wreck prevented Guth and the others from getting too close. Guth and his comrades moved on.

By the time the men reached Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, Easy was nowhere to be found. Before continuing their search, Gordon, who carried a camera, suggested a souvenir picture of his buddies in front of a World War I monument in the town square. So Guth, Mellet, David Morris, Daniel West, Talbert, and Smith lined up for a photo. Several infantrymen from the 4th Division stepped into place behind them. That photograph would one day become the famous cover shot for historian Stephen Ambrose's 1992 book *Band of Brothers*.

Back Together at Carentan

A DAY LATER, ON JUNE 8, Guth and the others were reunited with Easy while the company was guarding Sink's headquarters at the small hamlet of Angoville-au Plain. The company remained there until June 11, when it rejoined the 506th in time to assault the German-held town of Carentan.

Easy's attack route into Carentan was along Nationale 803, or Rue d'Auvers. To Winters's dismay, the road was almost devoid of cover until it reached the town. As a result, when he launched his attack, Easy was raked by machine-gun fire from a hotel at the intersection ahead. Harry Welsh and a few others got into the town, only to find themselves alone. The rest of the company was hunkered down in what little shelter there was along the road's shoulders.

Irate, Winters leaped to his feet, disregarding his own safety. Exposed to German fire, he dashed about madly in the middle of the roadway screaming "Go! Go!" and "Keep moving!" In a rage, he physically shoved some of his men forward. Finally, in ones and twos, they rose and began running along Rue d'Auvers. Their

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

CARNAGE AT CARENTAN

Left: Walter Hendrix and Talbert, both of Easy's 3rd Platoon, stand along a small dirt path outside the town of Carentan. Most of Easy's scattered men were back together in time to join the 101st Airborne's assault on Carentan, which was occupied by the German 6th Parachute Regiment and 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division. It was a fierce fight that bled Easy. After the Americans captured the town, Easy helped repel a determined German counterattack at Bloody Gulch. Right: The *Band of Brothers* series devoted its third episode to the vicious street battle. The Normandy town was re-created at a former British aerodrome.

PHOTO FROM FORREST GUTH VIA JOE MUCCIA

attack gave Welsh an opening to knock out the machine gun with a grenade.

Reaching the hotel, Easy wheeled left and charged down Rue Holgate into a wide plaza bisected by the Cherbourg-to-Paris railroad. Here, Sergeant Lipton was wounded. But the company's momentum carried the men across the plaza and along Rue Holgate to the town's main square, Place de la Republique, which featured a World War I memorial consisting of a winged female figure atop a granite pedestal. Near this statue, a ricocheting bullet struck Winters in the shin, resulting in his first and only combat wound of the war. In pain, he joined Lipton and other Easy men at an aid station in the plaza, by the railroad tracks.

Sergeant Ed Tipper was also wounded in Place de la Republique, but far more grievously than Winters. Tipper had entered a house to check for enemy troops. As he emerged, a German mortar round struck the building while he was still in the doorway. His injuries were severe. Talbert later wrote that it looked as if half of Tipper's face was gone, including one eye. He thought Tipper could not survive his injuries. But he did.

In 2009, Tipper told this writer, "When I realized how badly I was wounded, I thought my life was over. I thought I couldn't live

CARENTAN SOUVENIRS

As the battle for Carentan came to a close, Guth took stock of the souvenirs he had managed to accumulate. Seen here, his acquisitions included German military caps, binoculars, a knife, a belt, and jump smock of a *Fallschirmjager*, or paratrooper. The owner was bayoneted to death in the battle.

COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINT-CÔME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE

any kind of normal life; couldn't get a license to drive a car, or maybe be in a wheelchair or have a walker. None of that happened. I lived a totally normal life."

All-Out Mayhem in Bloody Gulch

A DAY AFTER THE ASSAULT ON CARENTAN, the 101st Airborne formed a defensive perimeter around the town. Easy Company was placed on the division's far right, with its line ending at a railroad track with nothing but swampland beyond. As the company approached a hedgerow on high ground two miles outside Carentan, German mortar and small arms fire from the hill hit the company. Holding the elevated ground gave the enemy an excellent field of fire. Easy Company returned fire as Winters quickly deployed his men along a hedgerow just to their front. Keeping his head well beneath the flying lead, Winters crawled along the line, encouraging the men.

Recalling the fight in 2004, Winters said, "The most important thing you can do as a leader is to move around and let the men know you're there, that you're watching out for them, and that they're not alone. You have to keep your own head down, pop up and take a shot or two, and then keep moving."

Dusk brought a lull to the fight, but the night was far from quiet. While checking on outposts, Talbert, who was wearing a captured German rain poncho, was bayoneted by Private George H. Smith Jr. Talbert had attempted to wake Smith up for guard duty, but emerging from the haze of sleep, Smith mistook Talbert for an enemy soldier. Thanks to a gift from his mother, Talbert survived.

"His mother gave each of her sons a Bible when they entered the service and told them to carry it close to their hearts for protection," Guth told this writer in 2008. "It probably saved Tab's life."

Meanwhile, Winters was preparing himself for a dawn attack on the Germans across the way. He placed his machine guns where they could provide maximum support and deployed his mortars to the rear where "Wild Bill" Guarnere began pre-setting the ranges

The Germans struck first, opening up with mortars. The ground vibrated from the blasts. Hot steel and wood splinters filled the air above the men as they huddled in foxholes they had dug amid the now exploding hedgerow. When the barrage ended, Winters jumped up and scampered along his line telling the men to be ready for a German assault and to mark their targets

The German 6th Parachute Regiment, angered after being driven from Carentan, led the counterassault. All along the 506th's sector, toughened German paratroopers poured small arms fire on the GIs' line. Throughout the hot fight men shouted and cursed in English and German, sometimes in anger, other times in pain or shock as a bullet found flesh

Above the roar of the battle Winters and his men soon heard a frightening new sound: the metallic clanking of tank treads. Poking their deadly prows over the crest of the ridge, the Nazi armor fired into the American line. Their 75- and 88 mm shells tore through the hedgerow, shattering trees and plowing up the

earth. The sudden and unexpected arrival of the tanks rattled Fox Company on Easy's left, which fell back in confusion.

Fox's withdrawal exposed the right flank of Dog Company, the next in line. Soon Dog joined the retreat. Like a row of dominoes, company after company, battalion after battalion, gave ground until the left flank of the 101st was pressed back into Carentan itself. Only Easy Company, on the far right, held fast in the teeth of the German firestorm.

Harry Welsh and his first platoon now had to defend Easy's suddenly exposed left. The men ducked as a tank shell exploded nearby, wounding Smokey Gordon and Private Roderick J. Strohl. A *Jagdpanzer* (a self propelled antitank gun) lumbered toward the gap left by Fox Company. Welsh grabbed Private John McGrath and the two ran into the open. McGrath carried a bazooka while Welsh clutched a satchel containing several rockets. McGrath knelt as Welsh jammed a rocket into the rear of the bazooka. Once the weapon was loaded, Welsh tapped McGrath on the head and the private fired. The rocket streaked at the tank, only to carom off harmlessly. Welsh hastily reloaded the weapon as McGrath shouted, "You're gonna get me killed lieutenant."

Trying to knock out the menacing bazooka, the tank fired its main gun at Welsh and McGrath, but being on higher ground, the gunner couldn't depress the barrel enough and the shell passed over the men.

"Hold your fire until I tell you," Welsh told McGrath.

He waited as the tank climbed a small rise, then said, "Fire."

The rocket hit the tank's soft underbelly, pierced the thin armor and detonated. The tank exploded in a roar of smoke and flame. Carrying its dead crew, the tank rolled a few feet forward from its own momentum, then came to a smoldering stop. By that time, Welsh and McGrath were back in the cover of the hedgerow. The destruction of the tank had a sobering effect on the other armored crews, who halted their vehicles in place.

By now, Strayer had managed to push Dog and Fox companies back into place, securing Easy's flank. The hard fight continued through the day. Then, around 4:30 in the afternoon, Winters heard the bellowing of diesel engines. Sherman tanks of the US 2nd Armored Division rolled through the fields to Winters's left, machine guns and 75mm main guns blazing.

One German tank blew up, then another, under the sudden onslaught of American armor. Pressed by the Shermans and taking casualties, the Germans abandoned their attack. The surviving enemy tanks shifted into reverse and retreated over the crest. Then the German infantry began falling back, ending what Winters called "a very, very tough day."

The fight, which became known as Bloody Gulch, was the 101st Airborne's last action in Normandy. The division was trucked off the line, first to Cherbourg, then into camp behind Utah Beach. By mid July, Winters and the men of Easy Company were back in the familiar environs of the Wiltshire village of Albourne, England.

Of the 139 Easy Company paratroopers who had jumped into France on June 6, Winters could now count only five lieutenants, including himself, and 69 men. Easy Company had been badly mauled, but it was now a true "band of brothers."

"We saw and experienced the worst things humans can see or experience," Guarnere later wrote. "We saved each other's lives. It was give and take. The bond really came out."

Easy Company's part in the battle for France was over. But despite their losses, the men ached to get back into the fight.

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

HONOR FOR EAGLES

On July 2, before Easy returned to England, the army honored four 506th men with the Distinguished Service cross. They were (front-and-center, from left): First Lieutenant Father John S. Maloney, 506th chaplain; Captain Lloyd E. Patch, 1st Battalion; Major H.H. Hannah, headquarters; and Winters. 101st Airborne commander Major General Maxwell Taylor (farthest left) attended. US First Army commander Lieutenant General Omar Bradley (rear center, with three stars on helmet) presented the medals.

"When we got back to England," Guth told this writer in 2008, "we were ready to go again."

Two months later, they would indeed "go again." This time, they would jump into occupied Holland. ★

LARRY ALEXANDER *is a journalist and columnist for the* Intelligencer Journal *newspaper in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is the author of* Biggest Brother: The Life of Major Dick Winters, the Man Who Led the Band of Brothers *(2005) and* In the Footsteps of the Band of Brothers: A Return to Easy Company's Battlefields with Sergeant Forrest Guth *(2010).*

D-DAY CASUALTY

At the Top

The sudden loss of Easy Company's commander adds to D-Day's chaos—but thrusts a worthy officer into acting command.

First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan was no newcomer to the 506th Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion when he joined Easy Company. Before replacing Captain Herbert Sobel as Easy's commander, Meehan served in Baker Company in the same battalion. Meehan commanded Easy Company for only four months before it embarked upon what General Dwight Eisenhower called the Great Crusade: the invasion of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944.

Meehan expressed tremendous pride in leading Easy Company. In a letter he wrote to his wife just before taking off for the unit's D-Day jump into Normandy—actually handing the note out the door of his C-47 transport plane—he wrote, "In a few hours I'm going to take the best company of men in the world into France. We'll give the bastards hell."

Unfortunately, Meehan would never see action on the ground. His plane took a tremendous amount of fire from enemy anti-aircraft guns north of Carentan, France. It went down suddenly, crashing at Beuzeville-au Plain. Meehan and all the other paratroopers on his plane—including all of the company's headquarters personnel—perished. With Meehan missing (the crash wasn't confirmed for several years), command of Easy Company fell to First Lieutenant Richard Winters, who led Easy through the remainder of the Normandy campaign. ★

—James Cowden, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

EASY COMPANY'S D-DAY COMMAND CHANGE

Above, left: The man who took command of Easy Company in February 1944—First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan III—had spent two years at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art, hoping to become a commercial artist. War changed his plan. Soon Meehan was a promising airborne officer. But his chance to lead Easy Company in combat ended when his plane crashed on D-Day. Above, right: First Lieutenant Richard Winters (at Camp MacKall, North Carolina, in 1943) became Easy's acting commander. Opposite: In the 1950s, Meehan's dog tag was found alongside a watch in the wreckage of his plane. The watch's stopped hands indicated the plane went down at 1:12 A.M.

ABOVE LEFT & OPPOSITE PAGE: COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINT-CÔME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE
ABOVE RIGHT: RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

NORMANDY
Memories

Members of Easy Company reflect on D-Day, Carentan, Bloody Gulch, and the return to England.

Staff Sergeant Roderick G. "Rod" Strohl

"Everybody Had Their Own Thoughts"

WHEN WE WERE GOING OVER, first of all, you got nervous and you had to go to the bathroom all the time as you were loading up and you couldn't get in the plane by yourself because you had that much equipment on. You had somebody help you. You'd sit in the plane and, oh, you gotta go to the bathroom. So now they're trying to work guys up on the plane, trying to work other guys out. You had to take all your equipment, all your equipment off, then you put it all back on again....

[Someone] said something that was supposed to be funny. I have no idea what it was, but it just fell like a lead balloon. And he said whatever joke he said, and then he started to laugh and went "Ha-ah-ugh" [laughs], and that was it. There really wasn't much talking on the plane, on our plane at least, on the way over. Everybody had their own thoughts.

"Like It Was in Slow Motion"

I REMEMBER HOW I FELT. I felt scared like everybody else did. And there was a popular song at the time, "The Bells of Normandy" [by Don Reid and Irving Miller]. It was a French song and all I could think of after we...were fired upon [his plane was hit and went down, but the paratroopers, pilot, and copilot got out] and after we jumped out, when we jumped out, all the sirens and bells and everything were going...to warn that we were there.

I guess we didn't need much warning after the first couple of minutes, but the bells were ringing, the fire was coming up, and from being up there in the plane and the fire coming up at you, it looked like it was in slow motion. Everything was just coming up toward you. And we have a park down here, Dorney Park [near Allentown, Pennsylvania, in the area where Strohl grew up], and every Fourth of July they have big fireworks displays. Well, all I could think of when I got out of the plane was "The Bells of Normandy" and the fireworks at Dorney Park....

"Who in Hell Is It?"

THERE WERE JUST TWO OF US together until daylight. That was Smitty and I. Whenever there were rumors about us going into combat, Smitty would be funny and say, "God damn, my nerves are all shot to hell." Well, when we jumped—you heard about the leg bags—and Smitty used a leg bag, so he lost everything [the bag was ripped away by the force of the air during the jump].

I had jumped the mortar and we got into a little discussion about who's going to jump what, so I jumped the bipod and the tube, so I was really loaded down. I didn't lose anything on the way down....

I landed in an orchard and there was a machine gun on the opposing corners and they were sweeping the orchard, but the orchard was not very level. It was furrowed, and I lay in there and took my equipment off and then I saw someone coming toward me. I could just see the silhouette and the guy had a knife, so I knew it had to be one of our guys because, you know, the Germans, being dug in there, wouldn't be running around on top of the ground with nothing but a knife, so I clicked the cricket. Nothing happened. Gave the password. Nothing happened. So finally I said "Who in hell is it?" And the guy said "Smitty."

"God damn, my nerves all shot to hell," he said. "I lost my rifle, lost my chow. All I have is this G-damn knife." So I told him, I said, "Well, I have more than I can handle." And having all that heavy equipment, I jumped a folding stock carbine. So I said, "Here, you take the carbine," and I reached out and he reached out with the hand that he had the knife in. And he's clanging on the stock of the carbine. I said, "Smitty, take it." He says, "Well, damn," he says, "I'm reaching for it."

So at the time, that was funny. You know, it's—you have to be there. You can't explain it. You wouldn't expect that anything would happen that night that you'd laugh at, but we did.

"I Didn't Have a Chance to Move"

I GOT HIT ON THE 13TH.... We were in an intersection [outside Carentan], and I don't know where a tank came from. A tank came into the intersection and cut the corner sharp. And there was a...bank and there were two guys there that got mauled in the tank tracks. And we were—because we had the mortar—we were down in the hole. We weren't up on the bank at the time...when

PATCH OF HONOR

The first cap patch Easy men wore had light blue for infantry and a chute for *parachute* infantry. Later, all airborne forces wore a universal "paraglide" version.

COURTESY OF THE CABA AMERICAN HERITAGE COLLECTION

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

STAFF SERGEANT RODERICK G. "ROD" STROHL

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

STAFF SERGEANT DARRELL C. "SHIFTY" POWERS

I got hit with a mortar round.

And when the round came in, I was sort of laying on my side and I saw it drop. It dropped maybe less than 10 feet from me, but seeing it drop and exploding was one moment. I didn't have a chance to move or protect my face or anything, so I got hit through the legs and rear end, through the arm and the side of my face. A lot of real fine dirt, shrapnel.... But I mean, I saw that, and boom! That was it.

Strohl was evacuated to Utah Beach for treatment. He recovered, and rejoined Easy Company at Aldbourne, England, in September—by going AWOL on a one-day pass from a doctor.

"Everything Would Tear Loose"

MORTAR WAS EFFECTIVE because you could shoot up over the hedgerows. The trouble was really seeing any long distance, like. And the hedgerow was very good cover. Machine guns in the hedgerow or riflemen in the hedgerow were very hard to spot. I mean, you could reconnoiter and think there's nothing in that field...and go over the hedgerow, and everything would tear loose.

Staff Sergeant Darrell C. "Shifty" Powers

"You Can't Take Any Prisoners"

WELL, WE LOADED UP ON THE PLANE. And one of the last things that they told us was that "Now we're going over to jump." We knew—in Normandy. We knew where we were going. They had already told us, restricted us to base and told us, and showed us a sand map of what we were gonna do, or what our objective was

And they said, "Now, when you get over there...you can't take any prisoners." Says, "We don't have any place to put prisoners." So that kind of eliminated that thing about taking a prisoner, you know, and you couldn't turn 'em loose if you took 'em prisoner. So we just had one choice.

"You Could Hear the Bullets and the Shrapnel"

...WE GOT ON THE PLANE and went across the channel. Boats, boats, boats, boats, and planes everywhere.... You can't imagine what that would look like, all those boats down there. Got over Guernsey Island and another island, and the Germans controlled that. That was just on the outside of France. So they must have called in that we were coming. And once we got...over the land where we were supposed to jump, why then that's when the Germans opened fire on us with their artillery, and machine guns.... And you could hear the bullets and the shrapnel hitting the plane.

"Wasn't Supposed to Be any Americans"

...I LANDED IN A FIELD. Good landing.... Now, I met up with [Technical Sergeant Amos J.] Buck Taylor and [Sergeant Will F.] Bill Kiehn.... It was way off the area where we was supposed to be....

But we—Buck and Kiehn and I—figured out which way to go to get back to where we was supposed to be.... And we was about a day's walk from where we should be.... We came up on this intersection, and 82nd [the 82nd Airborne Division] and A Company I believe it was, had some troops there guarding that intersection. Well, the rest of the night, the navy shelled that area. I'm sure that was on their firing plan, 'cause wasn't supposed to be any Americans in that area. They shelled us till almost daylight.

"We'd Ride the Rest of the Way"

AND WE LEFT THERE.... On the way, we walk on this road, and

over on our left, there was a glider had landed. And it had a jeep in it, and the jeep was standing upright on its rear wheels. So we thought somebody might be hurt in the glider and somebody might need some help. So we walked over in that field and checked it out. And while we was there, we decided we'd see if we could get that jeep out of there.... We'd get it out and ride the rest of the way.

Well...they had it braced in there pretty tight, and we couldn't get it to move. And Kiehn says, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put this little C-4 [plastic explosive] right here, a little over there. It'll knock those two braces loose and that jeep will fall down. We just take off." I said, "That sounds like a good idea to me."

So we set the charges, put the timer on 'em, fuses on 'em, lit the fuses. Welp, the charges went off. The jeep caught on fire. The glider caught on fire. What had happened—that jeep standing up on its rear wheels, gas had leaked out of it. So when that charge went off, it set the fire off. Yeah. So we burned up a brand new jeep and a glider. ...I said, if [former Easy Company commander Captain Herbert] Sobel would have seen us do that, he'd try to make us pay for 'em.

"I Had a Better Chance of Coming Out Ahead"

I'VE FIRED RIFLES AND GUNS all my life, ever since I was 12 years old.... And I always felt that...I'd have just as good a chance or a better chance than most people, firing a rifle, that hadn't fired as much as I did.

So when you go into these towns, it's mostly not hand to hand. But it's mostly rifle and rifle grenade, bazooka, things like that. 'Cause the Germans are in the town, you're not getting a lot of artillery thrown at you, because they don't shell their own troops. And I always felt that if I had my rifle, and a German had a rifle, that I had a better chance of coming out ahead than he did.

"We'd Just Sit there and Drink Our Wine"

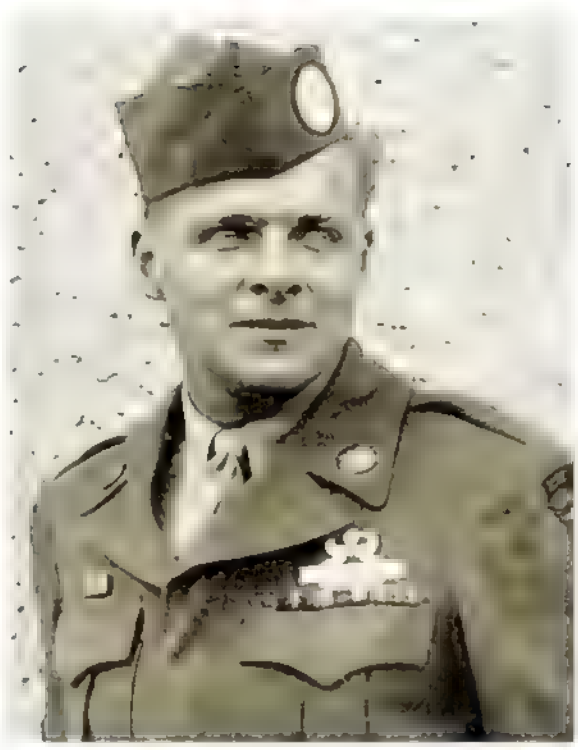
WE WENT THROUGH CARENTAN, we kind of got it cleared out. One of the other guys and myself was walking down the street, and we came to this store on the right. It was right in town. It was a wine store, so it wasn't locked, and we walked in.

They had shelves, shelves with all kinds of wine in it. So, we would take a bottle if it looked good, and we didn't know anything about wine. We'd take a bottle that looked good and sample it till we found a kind we liked. Now, we didn't destroy any of that man's wine, just what we sampled and drank.

So we took that bottle each, around behind that building and kind of even a courtyard. We was sitting back there drinking that wine, and there was a sniper shooting at us. But he couldn't see us. He was trying to ricochet a bullet in off the wall into us, you know, but he didn't have the right angle. So we'd just sit there and drink our wine, and then we got up and rejoined the company again.

"Almost Killed Him, Almost Shot Him"

...YESTERDAY, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN the day before D-Day, I was over in England. Had no thoughts about shooting somebody, or somebody shooting me. Then you get in a plane, and then 24 hours later, you see somebody, you're supposed to shoot 'em, or they're supposed to shoot you. And that was a big change, and it took a little to get used to. You kind of hesitate.



COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

TECHNICAL SERGEANT DONALD G. "DON" MALARKEY

Well, like when we landed.... Taylor and I were over in the hedgerow, in the shadows. It was a full moon. And this gentleman was coming across—a soldier was coming across this field where I had landed. And I told Buck, I said "Snap your snapper, Buck." And he snapped a little clicker. That guy hit the ground.

Buck said, "It must be a German." I said, "Well, I'll take a bead on him." And I had a bead on him, and I said, "Maybe we ought to give him the sign and cosign, you know." Well now, naturally, like I say, I was still living in England, you know, in my mind, at that time. I said, "I'll shoot him. We'll give him sign and cosign. If it's German, I'll shoot him."

So, we gave him the sign ["lightning"] and flashed. He said "Thunder," and it was Bill Kiehn. Almost killed him, almost shot him.

"Shoot those Germans. That's Your Job"

...AFTER A WHILE, after you've been shot at and you can hear the bullets going by your head, it finally dawns on you that what you're over there for is to shoot those Germans, you know. That's your job. That's what they put you over there to do.

And it don't bother ya and it didn't me, didn't bother me. And I know it didn't bother McClung. Ah, it's just something that you were trained to do. And over a period of time, you accept that. But it's not good to have to shoot somebody. Like I say, the people I shot maybe, maybe if I could have got 'em over here in the States in peacetime, I could have took 'em trout fishing or turkey hunting, or something like that, you know. You never know.

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

STAFF SERGEANT EARL E. "ONE LUNG" MCCLUNG

Technical Sergeant Donald G. "Don" Malarkey

"We Had the Motorcycle Hidden"

IN LATE JULY, WE WERE BEING SHIPPED back to England after our duties were completed here in Normandy, from D-Day on. Alton More had secreted a motorcycle from out of the main supply area that the United States had here at Utah Beach. He had the motorcycle hidden up here in the dunes area, and Buck Compton said that it was alright for us to bring it back to Auburn, England, with us.

We had a situation worked out with the navy, the LST [landing ship, tank] people. They laid the ramp down until Alton got the motorcycle down onto the beach area and loaded onto the LST. He hid out up here in the dunes. We signaled him when we were ready down at the side of the ocean...and he came rolling across the sand dune area, up onto the ramp. They pulled the ramp up so that nobody else could get on the vessel and then headed back to England.

When we got to England, [First Lieutenant Lynn D.] Buck Compton said it was alright for the two of us to take it back to Aldbourne, which we did. We stopped at Salisbury and got gas in the machine and ended up driving all the way to Aldbourne. We had it there, at Aldbourne, until we jumped in Holland on the 17th of September. After that, we never came back to England.

Captain Sobel had sent word that he knew we had a stolen vehicle, but he wouldn't come and take it from us until we went back into combat, so I presume that he ended up acquiring it and brought it, and kept it in our own regimental motor pool.

That's really the whole story about the motorcycle. Alton and I rode it from time to time during the summertime, went down to the coast area for weekends, but other than that, not very often. We couldn't drive it too much because we eventually would get caught. As it was, we didn't. We had a lot of fun.

"Hail Mary.... Hail Mary.... Hail Mary...."

WE WERE MOVING DOWN THIS ROAD after being attacked by a German counterattack force trying to come in to take Carentan.... As we were moving down this road, German paratroopers jumped out at an intersection on ahead of us and they were shooting up F Company people and also E Company people were subject to all the fire, but everybody in E Company bailed into ditches on both sides of the road and froze

In the midst of it, all I could hear was someone reciting "Hail Mary.... Hail Mary.... Hail Mary...." And I glanced up to the side of my head, and here's [chaplain] Father John Maloney walking down the intersection...holding a crucifix out in front of him, to go up and give aid to the wounded soldiers that were on up at the intersection.

Right after that, Dick Winters came running up behind and forcing everybody, yelling at everybody to get the hell out of the ditch and get moving, and we did... We were frozen until he did that, but the bravery of John Maloney inspired anybody and everybody to go ahead and move.... He received his distinguished service cross that day and deserved it....

Staff Sergeant Earl E. "One Lung" McClung

"A Mule Done a Somersault"

WE CUT ACROSS COUNTRY in as straight a line as we could toward Carentan. Well, on the way, there was a little house out there. It looked to me like maybe they had sent a shepherd or a herder out there for cows or goats or something, to watch, you know. And there was a German shooting at us from around the corner there..., so I was firing back.

But finally, I just drew a bead on where he appeared, and when something black come out there, I pulled the trigger. Well, a mule, done a somersault. I killed a little mule.

So that made me angry. So I said, "I'm going around the back side of this thing." So I went back a-ways and went around, flanked around and come in the back side. And I'm in the back, and there's a shed going back there. And I'm back in this corner—and there's a grenade landed right at my feet. And the only place I had to go was through this open window, so I just dove through this open window and that's when all the fun started.

There was a lot of shooting going on, and I'm rolling around the floor like a chicken with his head cut off. And we're all shooting at one another. And pretty quick it stopped, and I walked out and there's five dead Germans in there. But I think they shot themselves. I think they shot each other, because I don't think I shot that many times. And Jim Alley come up, he peeked in, he says "Good God!" he says, "They're still smoking!" So we walked out and went on to Carentan. ★

The comments presented here were recorded by the WORLD WAR II FOUNDATION, *and appear here by permission.* ROD STROHL *and* DON MALARKEY *are still living.* SHIFTY POWERS *died in 2009,* EARL MCCLUNG *in 2013.*

Saint-Côme-du-Mont / Carentan, Normandy

D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER

much more than a Museum

NORMANDY JUNE 2015 NEW ATTRACTION

"Hi, I'm the iconic spirit of Colonel Wolverton, an American paratrooper with a tragic destiny. I'll be your guide into the incredible 3D airborne world of the new 2000m² blockbuster mega-exhibition.

And if you're brave enough, become one of my chosen men and claim your seat aboard "Stoy Hora", an authentic C-47 aircraft, now converted into a dynamic high-tech flight simulator.

"Take-off" for a chaotic 7-minute "flight" and experience at first hand, our historic night mission across the English Channel on June 6th 1944.

I'm expecting you from June 2015 at Saint-Come-du-Mont. I guarantee that you will share with me a once in a lifetime, amazing, sensational experience that you will never forget."

D-DAY EXPERIENCE – a world premiere in Normandy aboard Steven Spielberg's C-47 aircraft used in Band of Brothers, converted into a dynamic high-tech flight simulator.

www.paratrooper-museum.org/en

in partnership with DASSAULT SYSTEMES | The 3DEXPERIENCE® Company

INTO HOLLAND:

Pushed Too Far

Easy makes its second and final combat jump in a bold gamble to end the war early.

The plan looked good on paper: 1. Drop paratroopers into Holland to capture roads and bridges across key rivers and canals. 2. Send tanks speeding through Holland over those bridges and slipping around the north end of the Siegfried Line that guarded Germany's western German border. Code-named Operation Market Garden—Market for the air drop, Garden for the armored advance—the plan seemed like a shortcut, a fast track to victory.

So, in early September 1944, Easy Company left Aldbourne again and traveled to the marshalling area at Membury Airfield in southern England to prepare for a jump into the Netherlands. On the 17th, the Easy men jumped with their 506th Parachute Infantry at Zon, Holland, and set off to capture their assigned bridges and roads.

It took about a week before Market Garden was pronounced a failure. But Easy Company would see plenty of combat in Holland after that, fighting there until late November.

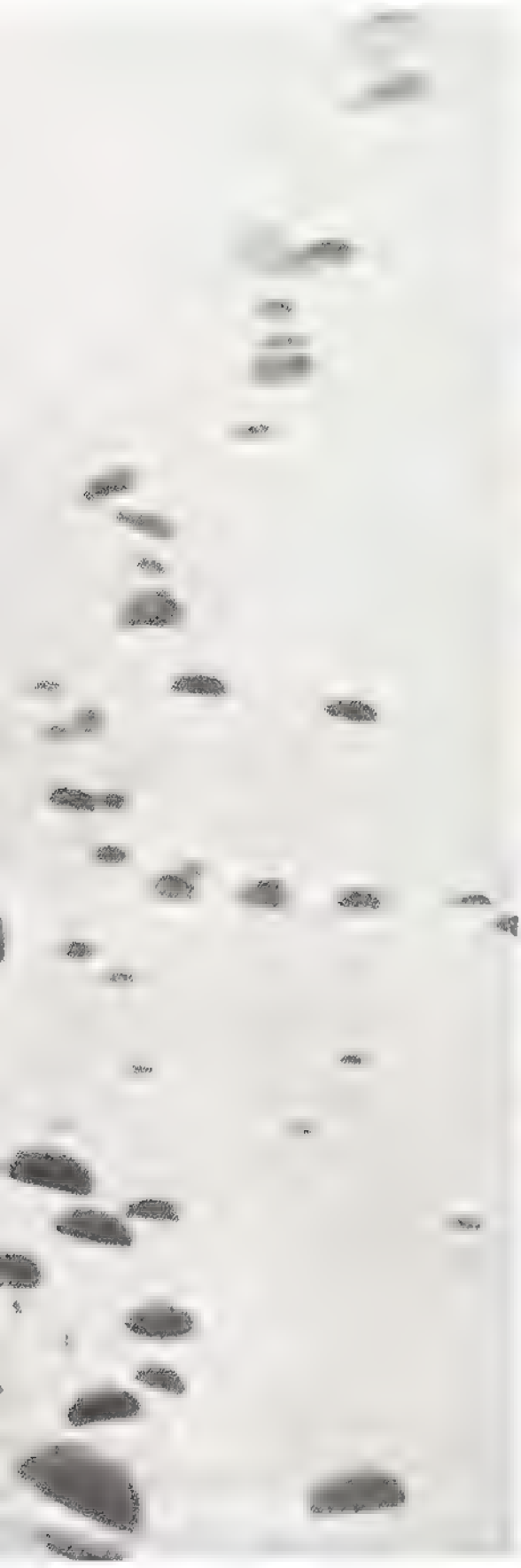
The resolve of the Dutch people impressed Easy's men. Private First Class Edward "Babe" Heffron, speaking at a 2010 event, remarked:

"You sit in a plane. You're going to Holland. And you say to yourself, 'What the hell am I *doing* up here? I could be back in the neighborhood having a Pepsi....' But I'm gonna tell ya, and don't forget this.... When we dropped [on] a village called Zon, where you have to take Wilhelmina Canal... When you saw the faces of those Dutch people—women, children... Could have been your own people. *Then* you knew why you were there...." ★

BELOW: WILLIAM S. JACKSON COLLECTION. PHOTO BY JEFF KING

COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINTE-COME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE

TAKING IT WITH YOU
Below: Paratroops jumped with most of what they'd need on the ground. That included items like an M1 Garand rifle. Above: It also included things like razors, extra ammo, and personal items, in a musette bag like this one. But the most important thing strapped to a paratrooper was his chute. When Sergeant Forrest Guth (whose bag this is) jumped into Holland, his chute didn't open fully. He slammed down and was paralyzed. Somehow, he returned to Easy Company by December.



CURAHEE SCRAPBOOK 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 30 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

506th INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

DON E. PRATT MEMORIAL MUSEUM, FORT CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY

U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO

LIBERATORS FROM THE SKY

Left: American paratroopers drift down into Holland on September 17, 1944. Operation Market is under way. The 506th Parachute Infantry, including Easy Company, dropped north of Eindhoven and hurried toward Son (Zon in WWII materials) to secure the bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal. The Germans blew it up as the 506th approached. The paratroops pressed on and reached the city of Eindhoven on the 18th. Top: The people of Eindhoven had lived under German occupation since 1940. They welcomed the paratroopers with open arms. Here, 2nd Battalion troopers relax near a storefront, accepting hospitality from city residents. Second from top: Easy men advance along the city's Bleekstraat on September 19th, alert for hidden Germans. Bottom: Elsewhere on Bleekstraat, men from Easy Company's headquarters and 3rd Platoon plan their movement toward Eindhoven's outskirts. They are (from left) an unknown trooper, Amos Taylor, C. Carwood Lipton, William Kiehn, James Alley, and Campbell Smith.

JOE BUCCA COLLECTION

BRIDGES—AND SHOES—SECURED

On September 19, Sergeant Gordon "Gordy" Carson and Technician Fourth Grade Frank Perconte of Easy's 1st Platoon—both Toccoa men—take a break near one of two Dommel River bridges at Eindhoven. Perconte holds a pair of Dutch wooden shoes. With the Dommel bridges secure, Easy had completed its Operation Market mission.

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

MEMORABLE EINDHOVEN

Above: Men of the 506th's 2nd Battalion, including Easy men, ride captured enemy vehicles out of Eindhoven. Corporal Walter Gordon of Easy's 3rd Platoon holds a bazooka in the lead vehicle. Below: The Easy men would remember Eindhoven with affection. Privates Harold Webb and Donald Wiseman, from Easy's 1st Platoon, had a picture taken with locals on the 19th.

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

Saga of Hell's Highway

Ole Trotter jumped down from his jeep with a bound,
Having beaten Hell's Highway from Uden to Zon,
And told all the men in his words most profound
That devilish road to be free—safe and sound.

So onto that Highway the Service men rolled,
Their twenty-two trucks whining shrilly in gear,
And shoved and then swore at the mud and the cold
As the convoy contrived to take definite mould.

From Zon on to Oedenrode, all is too well—
The trucks are all here, Limey traffic's not bad.
From Oedenrode on, (it is needless to tell)
To Halo's dark corridor rolling like hell.

But the leader swerves o'er at the shock of blast.
Trucks scream to a halt, and skilled drivers dismount.
All vault into holes as Hun bullets zing past,
And Jerry seigs, "Heil, we have got 'em at last!"

Now they're giving the Limies a bit of a shell
Just ahead of the Yanks, but they're working South fast
The mortars are caughing and eighty-eights yell
As Schmeissers start burping the Kidnappers knell.

The question which tears through the fevered Yank brain
As he sits in his hole at the side of the road,
Is whether to let the Hun sieze the whole train
Or try to get out from his bulletting rain.

The answer is easy, so up out of holes
Come twenty-two drivers. (the sharpest connivers
Who ever slipt out from the Jerry's square nose),
And up to the cabs of their trucks they arose.

Their trailers are dropped mid a deafening roar,
As trucks faced South with a clashing of gears,
Dropt trailers re-hooked, and then off as before
Leaving Jerry, no doubt, plenty god-awful sore.

But Jerry, made angry, forced tanks to the fray
And caught two Kidnappers before they could scram
With the rest of the men on that Hellish Macadam
But completed the turn to Heinies' dismay.

For Trotter (the b————————) who came down to tel
That roads all were open along that hot line,
Those drivers have chosen a place c l o s e to heil—
With friends of that sort they decline! ong to dwell.

GLB, III HOLLAND

US ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO

CURAHEE SCRAPBOOK: 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 28 JULY 1942–4 JULY 1945

ON HELL'S HIGHWAY

The paratroops called the 50-mile Eindhoven–Arnhem road, whose bridges they had saved, Hell's Highway. Easy Company moved to secure Uden, the midpoint. Left: Captain George L. Barton III of the 506th's service company wrote this poem after his drivers saved their convoy while under fire on September 26. Above: A 101st Airborne trooper studies a knocked-out British Firefly tank along the highway. The Brits puzzled the Yanks with their seeming lack of urgency in advancing.

PHOTO BY VALOR STUDIOS

Three Dozen AGAINST Three Hundred

Major Dick Winters considered the all-out, fast-paced battle at a crossroads on Holland's "Island" to be his unit's finest hour. Here, he tells the story in his own words.

by Major Dick Winters with Colonel Cole C. Kingseed

Now that Uden was secured, Easy Company and the remainder of the 101st Airborne Division received orders to move to the "Island," a long narrow area north of Nijmegen between the Lower Rhine and the Waal Rivers. The ground between the dikes of the two rivers was flat farmland, dotted with small villages and towns. The dikes along the rivers were twenty feet high and the fields were crisscrossed with drainage ditches that were covered with heavy vegetation. There were roads on the top of the dikes and narrow roadways through the adjoining farmland. The farming was concentrated and lush with fields of carrots, beets, and cabbages, interspersed with fruit orchards. For the upcoming operation the 101st Airborne Division was attached to the British XII Corps. On October 2, the 506th PIR moved by trucks over the bridge at Nijmegen and was the first unit of the 101st to move to the Island. Intelligence reported that the German 363d Volksgrenadier Division was in the vicinity, and received orders to clear the Island. The 363d Volksgrenadier Division had been cut up in Normandy, but now had been reinforced and was anxious to return to battle.

The following day our regiment relieved the frontline positions held by the British 43d Wessex Infantry Division, which was covering a line of approximately six miles in length. The 43d Division had suffered heavy casualties in their attempt to seize the crossings of the Lower Rhine and to evacuate the British 1st Airborne Division that had jumped at Arnhem. As we approached the forward positions, the British Tommies were withdrawing in trucks.

REFLECTING UPON EASY COMPANY

Late in life, Major Richard D. Winters stands by a guidon Easy Company carried on parade. Winters thought Easy was at its best in its attack on Germans near a crossroads on the Island, a region between Holland's Lower Rhine and Waal rivers. It was October 5, 1944, his last day leading Easy and his final WWII combat.

US ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO

IN PLACE ON THE ISLAND

Troopers of the 506th Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion, in which Easy Company served, man positions dug into the side of a dike near Heteren village on the Island. Much of the Netherlands is near or below sea level. Dikes make the land habitable and arable. During the war, they also provided natural lines of fortification.

Taking a good look at them, I had never seen more thoroughly dispirited soldiers. Two weeks of combat had totally drained their morale and had thoroughly demoralized the troops. Colonel Strayer's 2d Battalion now dispersed its line on the south bank of the Rhine, covering an area of over three miles in length, starting at a point one-half mile east of Heteren and extending two and a half miles west of Randwijk toward Opheusden. The 3d Battalion lay on our right flank with 1st Battalion in reserve. Easy Company held the right of the battalion line, with Dog Company on the left flank, and Fox Company in reserve. Colonel Strayer established battalion headquarters at Hemmen, a village just to the rear of our front lines. Each company had responsibility to cover one and one half miles of front, far in excess of the normal distance for company defensive positions. The line could only be covered by strategically placing outposts at the most likely avenues of enemy approach and where I calculated enemy infiltration would occur. Company headquarters would keep contact with these outposts by means of radio, wire, and contact patrols. I placed the second and third platoons on line and kept my first platoon in reserve. Easy Company's entire complement of personnel consisted of five officers and 130 enlisted men present for duty.

There was little action the first two days but around 0400 on October 5, the enemy attacked in strength with machine gun and mortar support on our flank, striking 3d Battalion headquarters and killing the battalion commander. Simultaneously on our front, a patrol of four men led by Sergeant Art Youman, left Randwijk to observe enemy activity and to adjust artillery fire from an outpost on the south bank of the Rhine River. The patrol included Youman, and Privates First Class Roderick Strohl, Jim Alley, and Joe Lesniewski. The patrol returned at 0420 with all four wounded by small arms fire and hand grenades. Alley had caught the worst of it. He had thirty-two holes in his left side, face, neck, and arm, and would spend the next two months in the hospital. Everyone in the patrol was out of breath. One look at them and you knew that they had been in combat and had faced death in the night. There was absolutely no question about it. Strohl reported that they had encountered a large body of Germans at the crossroads three-quarters of a mile east of Easy Company's command

PHOTO BY LARRY ALEXANDER

ENEMIES OFF THEIR GUARD

Early on October 5, a patrol reported Germans had pierced the 506th's line at a crossroads on Easy's right. Taking a 1st Platoon rifle squad, Winters investigated—and decided to attack. The Germans were atop and behind a dike along which a road ran. A star marks the spot. Winters's men approached via the ditch below the dike.

post. In his estimation, the Germans had achieved a major breakthrough of our lines. Strohl also reported that the enemy had a machine gun that was firing randomly to the south. As they had approached the machine gun, his patrol had come under fire.

Due to the potential seriousness of the situation, I decided to investigate myself. Taking Sergeant Leo Boyle from the company headquarters (he carried the SCR 300 radio), and one squad from 1st Platoon, which at this time was still the reserve platoon, I organized the patrol and started off as fast as possible to analyze the situation. As we approached the crossroads, I could see and hear intermittent machine gun fire, with tracers flying off toward the south. This firing made no sense to me because I knew there was absolutely nothing down that road for nearly three and half miles—and that would be the 2d Battalion headquarters at Hemmen.

At this point I halted the patrol and tried to make contact with the Canadian soldier who was our forward observer for artillery support. I wanted the observer to place a concentration of artillery fire on that crossroads, but I could not raise him on the radio. Leaving the patrol in charge of Sergeant Boyle, I conducted a short reconnaissance myself to determine which was the best way to get closer to that crossroad. I saw that the river side of the dike had a ditch about two to two-and a half feet deep that ran parallel to the dike road. This would provide us better cover. Leaving two men as guards for our rear and right flank protection, I took the remainder of the squad up and over the dike to the north side. We then followed the ditch toward the crossroads and the machine gun. Approximately 250 yards from the crossroads, I again halted the patrol and crawled up the ditch by myself to scout out the situation. As I got closer to the crossroads, I heard voices and observed seven enemy soldiers silhouetted against the night sky, standing on top of the dike by the machine gun. They were wearing long winter overcoats and distinctive helmets. I crawled until I was about twenty-five yards behind them in the drainage ditch at the bottom of the dike. I thought to myself, This is just like the movie *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

I returned to the patrol and informed them of the enemy dispositions. The instructions were clear: "We must crawl up there with absolutely no noise, keep low, and we must hurry." I could see that we would not have the cover of night with us much longer. We reached a position about forty yards from the machine gun as dawn approached. I halted the patrol and instructed Sergeant Dukeman and Corporal Christenson to set up our machine gun. I then went to each man and in a whisper assigned each a target on the German machine gun crew with instructions to fire on my command. Next I stepped back and raising my voice a bit louder, said "Ready, Aim, Fire!" The rifle fire was good, but our machine gun fired a bit high. Three Germans started running for the other side of the dike. I joined in with my M-1, as did everybody else. In short order we accounted for all seven enemy soldiers

No sooner had we eliminated the German gun crew than we started receiving some light rifle fire from the east side of the roadway that ran from the dike to the river. I immediately withdrew the patrol down the same ditch by which we had approached the crossroads for about 200 yards to another drainage ditch that ran parallel to the roadway from which we were receiving the rifle fire. I had one major problem because the Germans on the other side of that roadway were at least combat patrol–size and I only had one rifle squad at my disposal. I radioed Lieutenant Harry Welsh at the company CP to send up the balance of 1st Platoon and also 1st Lieutenant Frank Reis from the battalion headquarters company with his section of light machine guns. At this time we received some rifle grenade fire from the direction of a culvert that ran under the road to the river. Without any direction, the men immediately returned that fire and destroyed the German position. In the ensuing exchange, we lost Corporal William H. Dukeman, a man we all respected. "Duke" was a Toccoa man who was beloved by everyone in the company.

While waiting for the rest of the platoon to join us, I went out fifty yards into the field between the two lines to contemplate the situation we were facing. After careful reflection, three things were immediately apparent: first, the Germans were behind a good solid roadway embankment. We were in a shallow ditch, with no safe route for withdrawal. Second, the Germans were in a good position to outflank us to our right and catch us in the open flat field with no cover. Lastly, if the Germans had a force of any size, they could advance right down that roadway south and there would be nothing to stop them until they hit the battalion command post. Determining that we could not stay where we were but refusing to retreat, I decided to attack. To surrender the initiative to the enemy was indefensible. I figured that when you are in a faceoff, the guy who gets off the first shot usually wins. There was really no other decision to make other than to take the battle directly to the enemy. I asked God to give me strength.

By the time the balance of the first platoon arrived, full daylight reached our position. I called Lieutenants Reis and Peacock, the latter being the leader of 1st Platoon, and Staff Sergeant Floyd Talbert together and gave them the following orders: "Talbert, take 3d Squad to the right. Peacock, take the left with 1st Squad, and I'll take 2d Squad right up the middle. Reis, I want your machine guns placed between the columns and I want good covering fire until we reach that roadway. Then, lift your fire and move up and join us. Fix bayonets and get in line as quickly as possible. Peacock, when everybody is in position, I'll give you a hand signal and you drop a smoke grenade to signal our jump-off."

I then assembled the second squad and explained the plan. Don Hoobler was standing right in front of me. When I said, "Fix bayonets," he took a big swallow. I can still remember seeing his Adam's apple make a difficult trip up and down his throat. Hoobler's adrenaline was flowing.

My adrenaline was pumping, too. I had never been so pumped up in my life. On the smoke signal, the base of fire commenced and all three columns started their dash across the 175 to 200 yards of level field. I was a good athlete in school, but I am sure that I ran that 200 yards faster than I had ever run 200 yards in my life. Hidden in the grass were strings of barbed wire, about the height of the tops of our shoes. I tripped once or twice but continued running. Oddly enough, I seemed to be floating more than running as I rapidly outpaced everyone else in the platoon. When I reached the road leading to the dike, I was completely alone, oblivious to where the rest of the men were located

The roadway tapered from being twenty feet high at the dike to a level of about three feet in front of me. I simply took a running jump onto the roadway. Good God! Right in front of me was a sentry on outpost, who still had his head down, ducking the covering fire from Lieutenant Reis. To my right was a solid mass of infantry, all packed together, lying down at the juncture of the dike and the road, on which I was standing and which led to the river. They, too, still had their heads down to duck under that base of fire. Since it was already cold in October, the enemy were all wearing their long winter overcoats and had their backpacks on, all of which hindered their movement. Every single man was facing the dike and I was in their rear. I realized what the size of a company formation of paratroopers looked like and I knew this was much larger than one of our companies. Other than a

LEFT: COURTESY OF THE HERSHEY-DERRY TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY. PHOTO BY JEFF KING. OPPOSITE: RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION/VIA JOE MUCCIA

DECIDING TO CHARGE

Opposite: Winters at the Schoonderlogt estate, 2nd Battalion headquarters. At the crossroads, Winters saw there was nothing to block an attack on the estate. Above: Under fire after killing Germans on the dike, his men couldn't stay put or retreat. Calling up the 1st Platoon, Winters led a charge, signaled by a smoke grenade.

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

lone sentry, who was directly in front of me, the rear of this mass of men was about fifteen yards away and the front of the company was no more than an additional fifty yards from my position.

I wheeled and dropped back to my side of the road, pulled the pin of a hand grenade, and tossed it over. At the same time, the German sentry lobbed a potato masher back at me. As soon as I threw the grenade, I realized that I had goofed. I had kept a band of tape around the handle of my grenades to avoid an accident in case the pin was pulled accidentally. Fortunately, the enemy's grenade also failed to explode. I immediately jumped back up on top of the road. The sentry was still hunched down covering his head with his arms waiting for my grenade to explode. He was only three or four yards away. After all these years, I can still see him smiling at me as I stood on top of the dike. It wasn't necessary to take an aimed shot. I simply shot from the hip. That shot startled the entire company and they started to rise and turn toward me en masse. After killing the sentry, I simply pivoted to my right and kept firing right into that solid mass of troops.

The movements of the enemy seemed surreal to me. When they rose up, their reaction seemed to be so slow. When they turned to look over their shoulders at the sound of my firing, it was in slow motion, and when they started to raise their rifles to fire, they seemed so lethargic. I cannot give you a reason for this mental trance that I was in other than to say that everybody around me seemed out of synchronization. I was the only one who seemed normal. I never experienced anything like this in combat before or since. I immediately emptied the first clip of eight rounds, and still standing in the middle of the road, I put in a second clip. Still shooting from the hip, I emptied that clip into the enemy. By now I could see some of the Germans throwing their rifles to their shoulders to start shooting at me, but they were caught up in the pushing and shoving so they were unable to get a good shot at me. Most of the mob was just running away. After finishing the second clip, I dropped back to my side of the road for cover. Looking to my right, I could see Talbert sprinting to reach the dike. Crouched over, he was still a good ten yards from the road. Right behind him was Sergeant Rader, running straight up the road with that long stride of his. My column was still struggling to reach the road. Tripping over the wire, they were at least twenty yards away. Lieutenant Peacock was leading his column, but he was also about twenty yards from the road.

Not waiting for the remainder of the platoon, I inserted a third clip and started popping up, taking a shot or two, and then dropping back down. In the meantime, the Germans began running as best they could, but those long winter overcoats and packs shortened their strides as they ran away from me along the foot of the dike, toward the east. By now, Talbert, Rader and his crew were

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

In a *Band of Brothers* still, Winters reaches the top of the dike, surprising a German sentry. The grenades they exchanged failed to blow, so Winters shot him. Easy's charge came up behind the Germans, but Winters's shot alerted them. He kept firing. The platoon joined in, and soon the Germans broke and ran.

COURTESY OF LARRY ALEXANDER

A MACHINE-GUN SEND-OFF

As the Germans fled, a 1st Platoon machine gun—like this .30-caliber machine gun from the 501st Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion—opened up on them from atop the dike, killing and wounding many. It was a complete rout. About 35 Easy Company paratroopers had driven off some 300 enemy troops.

in position and they immediately commenced a deadly accurate fire. "Fire at will," I commanded. You could not have written a better script than this. Talbert's and Rader's squads had a duck shoot straight into the rear of that mass of retreating men. It was virtually impossible to miss. Without effective leadership to calm them down and to make this battle organized chaos, the enemy's retreat disintegrated into a rout.

At this time, another German company arrived from about 100 yards away, east of the road crossing. They had been in the vicinity of the windmill adjacent to the river. When they joined the company that we had routed, the increased mass of troops produced a target-rich environment. My column by now had reached the road and PFC Roy W. Cobb placed his machine gun and delivered long-distance fire on the retreating Germans. Cobb was a hard nosed individual if you ever saw one, a regular army man who clearly understood combat. Cobb's fire was extremely effective, as was the fire of Talbert's squad, since Talbert had a straight shot at a distance of 250 yards. Peacock's group, on my left, now engaged the enemy, inflicting six dead and nine prisoners on the retreating Germans. As the enemy fled along the dike to the roadway leading back to the river, we could observe their withdrawal at all times. I now called artillery support and we maintained effective fire on the Germans as they ran as fast as they could toward the river.

My immediate intention was to pursue them toward the river and cut off their retreat. I requested an additional platoon from battalion, and they ordered a platoon from Fox Company to come to my support. While waiting for the platoon to arrive, we reorganized. My casualties were one man dead and four wounded. Tech/5 Joseph D. Liebgott had been slightly wounded in the arm, but he was ambulatory so I assigned him the mission of escorting seven German prisoners to the rear. Liebgott had earned the reputation of being one of Easy's best combat soldiers, but we had all heard stories that he was very rough on prisoners. Liebgott was one of Easy Company's "killers," so I deemed it appropriate to take a bit of caution. When he heard me say, "Take the prisoners back to the battalion command post," he replied, "Oh boy! I'll take care of them." In his exuberance, Liebgott stood up and paced back and forth and he was obviously very nervous and concerned.

I stopped him in his tracks. "There are seven prisoners and I want seven prisoners turned over to battalion." Liebgott was highly incensed and started to throw a tantrum. Somewhat unsure of how he would react, I then dropped my M-1 to my hip, threw off the safety, and said, "Liebgott, drop all your ammunition and empty your rifle." There was much grumbling and swearing, but he did as I had ordered. "Now," I said, "you can put one round in your rifle. If you drop a prisoner, the rest will jump you." One of the German prisoners, an officer, evidently understood this exchange. After the officer comprehended my orders, he relaxed and sat down. Liebgott returned seven prisoners to battalion headquarters that day—I personally checked with Nixon.

When the platoon from Fox Company finally arrived, I distributed ammunition and then made plans to advance toward the river. I intended to set up a base of fire, and then move half the unit forward 100 yards, stop and set up another base of fire, and then have the second half of the platoon leapfrog 100 yards. We would again establish a base of fire and repeat the maneuver in this manner to the river, a distance of 600 yards. At the river end of this road was a ferry that connected the village of Renkun on the north side of the Rhine with a factory on the Rhine River's south bank. Obviously, the Germans had used this crossing to get these two companies to the "Island" from Arnhem. Now they wanted to return to the ferry to withdraw across the river.

We conducted four leapfrog movements with little trouble other than receiving a light concentration of artillery fire, which fell harmlessly on our left flank. As we reached the factory buildings, we were hit by an attack on our right rear flank by a force that I estimated at seventy-five men. Looking at my tactical posi-

Rescuing British Paratroopers

For the British 1st Airborne Division, the Allied airborne and ground invasion of the Netherlands—Operation Market Garden—was a catastrophe. The division's doomed effort to capture the road bridge at Arnhem ended with only about 2,500 men out of an estimated 10,400 escaping safely back across the Lower Rhine. Most of the others were killed or captured, but roughly 500 remained on the run behind German lines. The job of rescuing some of these men would fall to Easy Company

On the night of October 16, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel David T. Dobie, commander of the British 1st Parachute Battalion, managed to sneak through German lines and cross the river. Upon arrival, he told members of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the British XXX Corps that there were 125 British troops who would most certainly be killed or captured if nothing was done to save them.

A week later, on the night of October 22–23, First Lieutenant Frederick "Moose" Heyliger—the second officer to command Easy Company since Major Richard Winters became the 2nd Battalion's executive officer—led 19 hand-picked Easy Company men on a daring mission to rescue the stranded Brits.

Around midnight, the Easy Company men made their way down to the river, following tape laid by engineers to a cache of British collapsible canvas boats. There, they awaited a signal from Dutch resistance fighters across the river (V-for-Victory, . . . — in Morse code, flashed with red flashlights). Seeing this signal, the Easy men paddled swiftly and quietly across the river and met up with the British. It took just 90 minutes to get all 125 stranded Brits back to friendly territory, and all without notice by nearby Germans

A week later, while approaching an Easy Company outpost with Winters, Heyliger was shot by a nervous sentry. He spent the rest of the war in a hospital.

— James Cowden, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

tion from the factory, I realized that I was getting myself into a bottleneck. By now, Easy Company was really close to the river and we were looking up at the German artillery and mortar positions. And now, on my right rear flank, I had what was left of those two German companies pinching in on my flank and attempting to cut off the withdrawal of my two platoons. I decided it was better to call it a day, withdraw, and live to fight tomorrow. Consequently, we withdrew to the dike, leapfrogging in reverse, but always laying down a base of fire.

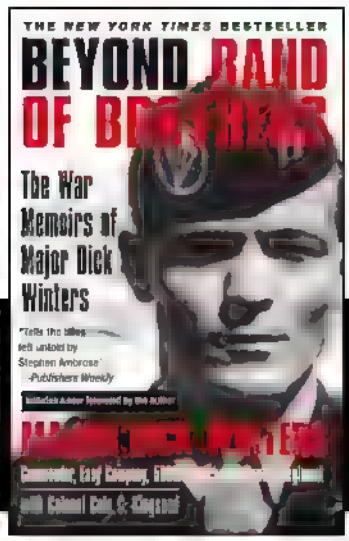
All went as planned, but just as we were pulling the last groups over the dike, the enemy cut loose with a terrific concentration of mortar and artillery fire right on that crossroads. They had that point zeroed in just perfectly. Before we could move the troops either right or left away from the crossroads, we suffered eighteen casualties, all wounded. I grabbed the SCR 300 radio and went to the top of the dike to try and return some artillery on the Germans. I put the radio down by my left shoulder and was coordinating artillery fire as rapidly as I could. I also called battalion and asked for medics and ambulances to extract the wounded. Lieutenant Jackson "Doc" Neavles, the assistant battalion surgeon, replied and wanted to know how many casualties. I told him we needed help for "two baseball teams." Neavles wasn't very sharp where sports were concerned, and asked me to put that message in clear language. I replied, "Get the hell off the radio so I can get some more artillery support, or we'll need enough for three baseball teams."

About that time a concentration of mortar rounds hit right behind me and I heard a ting. I took off my helmet to examine it, thinking I'd been hit on the helmet. There was no sign of damage, so I put it back on and then I noticed that the antenna to the radio sitting by my left shoulder had been clipped off right at the top of the radio. Eventually, the artillery and mortar fire ceased, but we had suffered far too many casualties to continue the engagement. Fortunately none was killed in weathering that mortar and artillery concentration. Sergeant Leo Boyle was one of those hit. He had been my right hand man all day, and he was in a foxhole right behind me when he was hit. That was the end of the war for Boyle, a very good, loyal friend. The ambulances came and picked up the wounded. I set up a couple of strong points to cover the crossroad, but did not put one on the crossroad since the Germans had already used the intersection as a target reference point. About this time Captain Nixon showed up and asked me, "How's everything going?"

"Give me a drink of water," I replied as I sat down on the edge of the dike. Until that point, I had not realized how exhausted I was. He handed me his canteen and as I went to lift the canteen, my hand was visibly shaking. I'd often seen Nixon's hand shake when he had one too many drinks, but this was the first time that I had ever seen my own hand shake. Nixon's shaking hands were the result of guzzling a shot of Vat 69 and was due to the shock of his nervous system gearing up. I felt my shaking hands were the result of my nervous system settling down, recovering from exertion and excitement.

How we had survived, I had no idea. We were certainly very lucky, as we had probably faced 300 plus troops. Fortunately the German leadership was abysmal. This was a far cry from what we had experienced in Normandy, where the enemy marksmanship and grazing fire inflicted a far greater number of casualties on Easy Company. At no time during our current battle had there been any evidence of German commanders directing well aimed and concentrated fire until their artillery had opened up as we reached the river. This lack of fire discipline was seen originally by the indiscriminate firing of the machine guns early in the morning. Once we had eliminated the enemy machine gun crew, the Germans magnified their mistakes by letting our initial squad get away with sitting in that open field, waiting for the balance of the platoon and the machine gun section to come forward from the company CP. While we waited, we were located in a shallow trench—they had a road bank for a firing line. We sat there for at least one hour without the enemy exercising the slightest bit of initiative. Additionally, the German officers allowed their company to bunch up in one gigantic mass once the battle started. Finally the Germans compounded their errors by permitting us to pin them down with two machine guns while the remainder of 1st Platoon made a dash across 200 yards of a perfectly flat field. To allow roughly thirty five men to rout two companies of elite troops hardly spoke well of the leadership of the enemy.

In my estimation, this action by E Company was the highlight of all Easy Company's engagements during the entire war and it also served as my apogee as company commander. Easy's destruction of the German artillery battery at Brecourt Manor on D-Day was extremely important in its contribution to the successful landing at Utah Beach, but this action demonstrated Easy Company's overall superiority, of every man, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack under a base of fire, withdrawal, and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns, and mortar fire. All this was done against numerically superior forces that had an advantage of ten to one in manpower and excellent observation for artillery and mortar support. Since early morning, we had sustained twenty-two casualties from the fifty-five or so soldiers who were engaged. Nixon and I estimated the enemy casualties as fifty killed, eleven captured, and countless wounded. I guess I had contributed my share, but killing never made me happy. Satisfied, yes, because I knew I had done my job; but never happy. ★



From Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters, *by* Major Dick Winters, *with* Colonel Cole C. Kingseed. *Reprinted by arrangement with Berkley Caliber, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2006 by Major Dick Winters and Brecourt Leadership Experience, Inc. Buy it online at www.penguin.com/book/beyond-band-of-brothers-by-dick-winters/9780425213759.*

BASTOGNE:

Holding the Line

Living in holes, cold and under heavy fire, Easy plays its part in the Bulge.

As December 1944 approached, the Easy men put the hard fighting of Holland behind them and headed to Mourmelon-le-Grand, a little more than 100 miles east of Paris.

It was time to rest, replace lost or damaged equipment and weapons and clothing, drill, and bring in replacements—fresh, green troops to drive the veterans crazy (especially the handful of remaining Toccoa men). The time in Mourmelon also promised a chance to play some football, look forward to Christmas and mail from home, and take in the fabled sights, amusements, and temptations of Paris.

Everything changed on December 17. The day before, all hell had broken loose in Belgium's forested Ardennes region. German forces had lunged westward, pushing the Allied line back in a deep salient that Americans called the Bulge. US forces were trying desperately to prevent a breakthrough, but they needed help quickly—especially at the crossroads town of Bastogne, Belgium.

So, on December 17, the 101st Airborne Division—including the 506th and Easy Company—received word that R and R was canceled. On the 18th, the paratroops loaded, not onto C-47s, but into trucks for the trip to Bastogne. The coldest winter in a long time was sweeping the Ardennes. Easy Company was in for a terrible ordeal. ★

COURTESY OF THE CLARK FAMILY

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

WINTER WAR MISERY
Above: At Bastogne, Easy supply clerk Maxwell Clark flashes a smile despite the circumstances. Bastogne was surrounded by Germans. It was Europe's coldest winter in decades. Easy was living outdoors in foxholes. Winter clothing, boots, and supplies were scarce. And Easy had a new and problematic commander, now that Captain Winters had moved up to 2nd Battalion executive officer. Left: Easy approaches the town of Foy, near Bastogne, in a scene from *Band of Brothers*.

CURRAHEE SCRAPBOOK 506th PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT 20 JULY 1942—4 JULY 1945

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

A cartoon from the 506th scrapbook sums up what Easy's war-weary men dreamt of as they reached Mourmelon. Instead, they were soon freezing and dying at Bastogne. "There was no warning," says the scrapbook. "One day we were safe in garrison, far from the guns and the killing. Some were even expecting to go to Paris that week."

US ARMY

A ROUGH RIDE AND A COLD WELCOME

Above: The journey to Bastogne had none of the danger—or glory—of a parachute jump. Like these men of the 501st Parachute Infantry, the 506th boarded trucks and trailers at Mourmelon on December 18 for a bumpy ride to Bastogne, some 127 miles to the southwest. Below: Staying warm was an endless quest at Bastogne. Some men even wrapped themselves with any extra fabric they could find. Most 101st Airborne officers were more fortunate, wearing parkas or flight jackets. Captain Winters wore this jacket.

TO FROM FORREST GUTH VIA JOE MUCCIA. TOP INSET: PHOTO BY LARRY ALEXANDER

BATTLING GERMANS—AND WINTER

Above. In the defense of besieged Bastogne, Easy Company was posted in the Bois Jacques north of Bastogne, near the town of Foy. Here, in a photo clouded by wintry conditions, Sergeant Forrest Guth rises from his Bois Jacques foxhole. Men suffered from living this way. Fires were prohibited; they became targets. The men wore leather jump boots, not the insulated, waterproof shoepacs troops should have received for winter conditions. As a result, debilitating trench foot and frostbite were a constant threat. Living on rations deprived men of the complete nutrition they needed to stay healthy. And inadequate clothing kept them shivering. This was the shape the Easy men were in as they held off fierce and bloody German assaults and bombardments. Top: Easy Company's foxholes are still visible in the Bois Jacques. The trees are still comparatively young; artillery rounds destroyed the thick pines that stood during the Bulge.

COURTESY OF THE SPEIRS FAMILY

BACK FROM THE BRINK AT FOY

The man who saved the day at Foy—First Lieutenant Ronald C. Speirs—prepares for a practice jump at Joigny, France, in September 1945, after the war was won. By the end of December 1944, US forces had broken the German siege of Bastogne. But German forces were firmly lodged in Foy, which was now ringed by 101st Airborne units that needed to capture the town of Noville. Foy was in the way. Easy Company dug in in woods nearer the town, only to be shredded by German shells. Finally, the 506th's 2nd Battalion, including Easy Company, was assigned to rush across an open field and overcome Foy's defenders. Easy's commander, First Lieutenant Norman S. Dike, Jr., balked dangerously during the attack, and his men were in danger of being slaughtered. Finally, Captain Winters intervened, sending Speirs in to relieve Dike. Speirs turned the tide of battle, leading by bold example. He would command Easy for the rest of the war.

PHOTO & ARTIFACT COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER SAINT-CÔME-DU-MONT NORMANDY FRANCE

A HAPPY COLLECTOR AT HAGUENAU

As US forces retook ground lost in the Bulge, the Germans attacked France's Alsace region. So, in late January, Easy moved some 180 miles southeast to defend the town of Haguenau. There, Guth, an avid souvenir-hunter, clowns around wearing a Luger pistol with holster and belt and an SS officer's cap. The jacket is a US B3 sheepskin bomber jacket, unusual for a paratrooper. Guth was from Pennsylvania's Lehigh County and spoke Pennsylvania German. He translated for interviews with German prisoners nabbed in a February 1945 patrol across the Moder River at Haguenau. Inset: Guth, himself a wood-carver, captured this wooden eagle at Bastogne.

INTO THE ALPS:

To the Halls of Hitler

Hunting for the Führer's alpine hideaway, Easy Company tastes the fruits of victory.

Easy Company and the 506th had done their part to halt Adolf Hitler's last ditch offensive in the Ardennes. They had helped shore up Alsace during the Germans' diversionary attack there, in the aftermath of the Battle of the Bulge. Now, near the end of February 1945, they finally prepared to leave Haguenau in Alsace and return to Mourmelon.

Before they left Haguenau, however, there was business to attend to. First Sergeant C. Carwood Lipton received his promised battlefield commission to second lieutenant. And Captain Winters finally received the rank of major, normal for a battalion executive officer.

Easy Company and the 506th would spend a little more than a month at Mourmelon before they joined the great Allied push into the heart of Germany. Stationed opposite Dusseldorf for much of April 1945, the Easy men would finish the war hunting for a rumored Nazi bastion in the Bavarian Alps, where, the American brass feared, Adolf Hitler's loyalists might make a last stand. That quest would lead them to an end-of-war experience that was satisfying beyond any American soldier's expectations: the capture of Hitler's own mountain estate, and those of some of the Führer's highest officials.

Then came the waiting—waiting to be transferred back to the States for discharge from the army. ★

506th REGIMENTAL PIN COURTESY OF JOE MUCCIA

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

AT HITLER'S HOUSE

Above: Easy Company had come a long way from Camp Toccoa and its challenging Mount Currahee, whose name had become the 506th Parachute Infantry's motto. In April 1945, as Germany succumbed to Allied pressure on its eastern and western borders, Easy was sent on a mission to look for a Nazi hideout in the Bavarian Alps. Left: The search would lead Easy to Hitler's residence at Berchtesgaden, the Berghof, where, as this wartime photo shows, the Führer felt most at home.

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

SCREAMING EAGLES AT THE EAGLE'S NEST

On May 5, 1945, Easy and the 2nd Battalion captured Hitler's Berghof ("mountain court") at Berchtesgaden—and this adjacent Kehlsteinhaus ("house on the Kehlstein," a mountain sub-peak), the Eagle's Nest. Officers and men moved into nearby homes and barracks and indulged themselves with captured drink and luxuries. Major Winters gave 2nd Battalion operations officer Captain Lewis Nixon, a heavy drinker, first pick in a lavish wine cellar created by Nazi official Hermann Göring.

COURTESY OF VALOR STUDIOS

WARRIORS IN A POSTWAR EUROPE

Above: GIs search enemy troops after the Nazi regime's fall in early May 1945. German soldiers surrendered in droves. As Easy Company moved to Berchtesgaden from Dusseldorf, streams of paroled Germans passed in the opposite direction, heading home. Below: After enjoying Hitler's involuntary hospitality at Berchtesgaden, Easy moved below Salzburg, Austria, to occupy Kaprun and Zell am See ("cell on the sea," named for a former monastery and the Zeller See, the town's lake). Headquartered at Zell am See, the 506th placed this sign on the way into town. Easy remained there through July, then moved to Joigny, France, to await orders or discharge.

HERMAN MOULLET VIA THE 506th INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

BORED SILLY AT ZELL AM SEE

Life in Austria was busy at first—governing enemy troops, finding holdouts, imposing order. Then, with locals doing the chores, Easy turned to sports, hunting, romance, drinking...and boredom. These relaxed 1st Platoon Easy men are (from left): James Sholty, Vincent Collette, unidentified, Bill Wheeler, and Ralph Trapuzzano.

COURTESY OF THE COLETTE FAMILY VIA JOE MACCIA

The Camp at Buchloe

The concentration camp that Easy Company found at Buchloe, outside Landsberg in Germany's Bavarian region, was part of the Kaufering work camp system, a satellite of the massive Dachau complex. Run by the Nazi loyalists of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, these camps provided slave labor for a secret construction project: carving out underground factories to manufacture ballistic missiles and warplanes, including newly developed jet fighters.

The prisoners were overworked and underfed, and housed in semi-subterranean barracks built to be less visible to Allied aircraft. Thousands might live in a single Kaufering camp. Most were Jews.

The arrival of Allied forces in Bavaria in April 1945 was a crisis for the camps' SS overseers. They responded by force-marching their prisoners, camp by camp, toward Dachau. Many inmates died or were killed along the way. In at least one camp, those too weak to travel were burned alive in their barracks.

Major Winters wrote in his memoir: "The memory of starved, dazed men who dropped their eyes and heads when we looked at them through the chain-link fence, in the same manner that a beaten, mistreated dog would cringe, left a mark on all of us forever."

Landsberg residents insisted they didn't know about the camps. But to the American forces, such ignorance seemed impossible. They forced the townsfolk to clean up the camps and bury the dead.

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

THE UNBELIEVABLE HORROR

In the *Band of Brothers* series' Episode Nine, "Why We Fight," Easy Company encounters the horror of a Nazi German work camp at Buchloe, near the Bavarian town of Landsberg, Germany. The camp was a satellite of the larger Dachau concentration camp. Its SS overseers were long gone when Easy Company arrived.

RICHARD D WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE NUCCIA

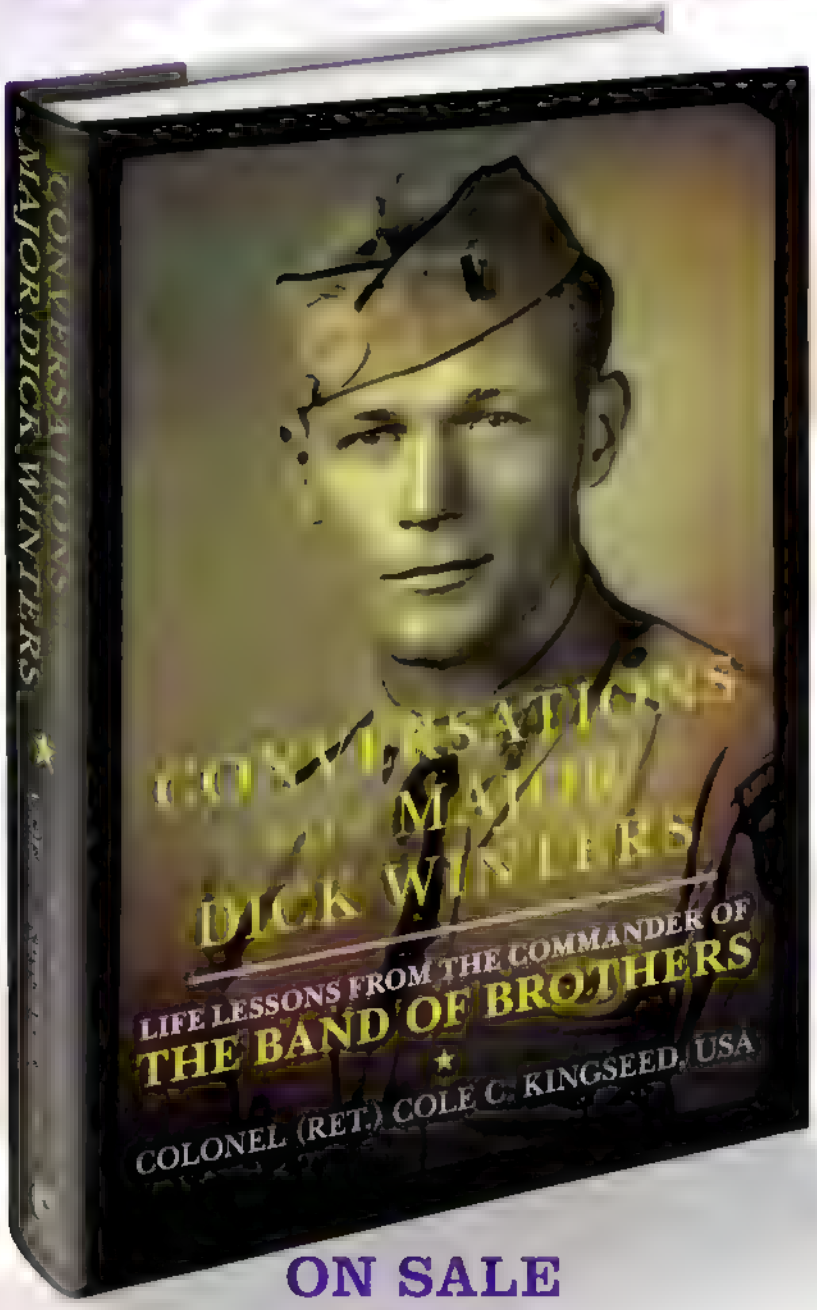
SPOILING THE SPOILS OF WAR

To the victors go the spoils. And at Berchtesgaden, what spoils the Easy men found! Take this Mercedes staff car. First Sergeant Floyd Talbert—that's him on the hood—*did* take it. It was his to play with. Then the brass ordered all non-military vehicles to be turned in. An officer would end up driving the car, thought Talbert, so he wanted to make sure it was safe. How bulletproof *was* that windshield? It turned out standard ammo couldn't break it. But armor-piercing rounds could...

THE NEW NATIONAL BESTSELLER

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE BAND OF BROTHERS

The *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *Beyond Band of Brothers* tells the story of Major Dick Winters: a story of leadership, fame, friendship, and his struggle to find the peace that he promised himself if he survived World War II.


CONVERSATIONS WITH MAJOR DICK WINTERS
LIFE LESSONS FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE BAND OF BROTHERS
COLONEL (RET.) COLE C. KINGSEED, USA

"Colonel Cole Kingseed has captured the essence of a great military leader as only a soldier-historian can."
—Major General H. R. McMaster

"An anatomy of leadership, of courage, of discipline, and above all, of self-knowledge."
—Dennis Showalter, author of *Patton and Rommel*

ON SALE NOW

BERKLEY

THE MEN OF
Easy Company

Company E, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division

The following men were members of Easy Company during World War II, even if only temporarily.

James H. Alley, Jr. • Owen L. Andrews • Keith Ansell • Luke Atkins • Roderick G. Bain • Kenneth T. Baldwin • Raymond L. Ballew • Archibold Smith Barnwell • Frederick G. Bealke • Paul L. Becker • Salvatore Frank Bellino • James V. Benton • Richard F. Berg • Edward J. Bernat • Homer T. Blake • Albert Blithe • Robert J. Bloser *KIA 6/7/44, Normandy* • Donald S. Bond • Conrad M. Booy • Leo D. Boyle • Richard L. Bray • Robert B. Brewer • Charles F. Broska • Earl V. Bruce • Thomas H. Burgess • James D. Campbell *KIA 10/5/44, Holland* • John J. Capoferra • Mathew J. Carlino • Leopolloo P. Carnillo • Gordon F. Carson • Ora M. Childers • Burton P. Christenson • Jack Churchill • Robert Cipriano • Maxwell M. Clark • Roy W. Cobb • James F. Coleman • Vincent S. Collette • Herman F. Collins *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • James Comba • James M. Combs Jr. • Lynn D. Compton • John G. Connell • Francis M. Conway • Raymond J. Coon • Philip Coviello • Robert H. Cowing • Samuel M. Cowther • Seth O. Crosby • Bernard S. Cunningham • Barry J. Dassault • Richard P. Davenport • James K. Davis • Edward R. De Tuncq • Jay S. Dickerson • James L. Diel *KIA* 9/19/44, Holland* • Norman S. Dika, Jr. • Rudolph R. Dietrich *KIA 3/8/1944, England* • Joseph P. Dominguez • Edward J. Donahue • William H. Dukeman, Jr. *KIA 10/5/44, Holland* • Carl P. Eckstrom • Walter F. Eggert • George L. Elliott *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Taskel Ellis • George Earl • Charles S. Eaton • Chester Eschenbach • John Lee Eubanks • William S. Evans *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Carl L. Fenstermaker • John F. Fieguth • Gerald L. Flurle • Jack E. Foley • Norman A. Ford • Berttran J. Foster, Jr. • Bradford C. Freeman • Antonio Garcia • Dennis D. Garland • Richard R. Garrod • Roy P. Gates • Johnnie E. Gathings • John L. Geraghty • William D. Gier • Terry G. Giles • Eugene S. Gilmore • Jack O. Ginn • Milton B. Glass • Walter S. Gordon, Jr. • Charles E. Grant • Frank B. Grant • Everett J. Gray *KIA 6/8/44, Normandy* • Genoa H. Griffith • Stephen E. Grodzki • William J. Guarnere • Forrest L. Guth • Lloyd D. Guy • Stanley L. Hagerman • Earl L. Hale • Franklin W. Hale • Robert E. Haley • Herman E. Hansen • Walter E. Hansen • Robert Hargis • Elwood Hargroves • Thomas A. Harrell • Siles E. Harrellson • Terrence C. Harris *KIA* 6/13/44, Normandy* • Dale L. Hartley • George B. Hartsuff • Lester A. Hashey • Verlin V. Hawkins • Jack W. Hayden • Harold G. Hayes *KIA 12/44, Bastogne* • Cyril B. Heckler • Edward J. Heffron • J. D. Henderson • Walter L. Hendrix • Robert C. Hensley • A. P. Herron *KIA 1/13/45, Bastogne* • Elwood Hertzog • Clarence Hester • George W. Hewitt • Frederick T. Heyliger • George Higgins • Paul A. Hite • Joseph E. Hogan • Owen V. Holbrook • John R. Holland • David L. Holton • Donald B. Hoobler *KIA 1/3/45, Bastogne* • Walter G. Howard • Clarence S. Howell • William A. Howell • Bruce A. Hudgens • Charles A. Hudson • W.D. Hudson • Richard H. Hughes, II • Richard J. Hughes • Richard F. Hughes *KIA 1/9/45, Bastogne* • Warren C. Huntley • Charles F. Hussion • Sherman M. Irish • Eugene E. Ivie • Eugene E. Jackson *KIA 2/10/45, Alsace* • John A. Janovec *KIA 2/26/45, Germany* • Robert Jarrett • Coburn M. Johnson • Edward J. Joint • George E. Jones • Henry S. Jones • Harold Wendell Jones, Sr. • Joseph M. Jordon *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Vernon Jordan • John T. Julian *KIA 12/21/44, Bastogne* • William F. Kiehn *KIA 2/10/45, Alsace* • Donald L. King • Paul M. Kohler • John R. Korb • George Kramer • William N. Kratzer • Steven A. Kudla • Harold H. Lager • Paul E. Lamoureux • Louis Lampos • George Lavenson • Robert T. Leonard • Joseph A. Lesniewski • Joseph D. Liebgott • Quinton E. Lindler • Clifford Carwood Lipton • Philip E. Longo • Dewitt Lowery • John Lusty • George Luz • Clarence O. Lyall • John C. Lynch • Robert F. MacKay • A. Mahmood • Thomas Maitland • Donald G. Malarkey • Albert L. Mampre • Robert A. Mann • Robert K. Marsh • John W. Martin • Walter E. Martin • Michael V. Massaconi • Salve H. Matheson • Robert L. Mathews *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Jack F. Matthews • Leo J. Matz • Edward A. Mauser • Arthur J. Mauzerall • Robert Maxwell • John G. Mayer • William C. Maynard • John McBreen • Carl F. McCauley • Earl J. McClung • Thomas A. McCreary • Robert A. McCutcheon •

William T. McGonigal, Jr. *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • John McGrath • Walter L. McKay • James A. McMahon • William E. Medved • Thomas T. Meehan, III *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Francis J. Mellett *KIA 1/13/45, Bastogne* • Joachim Melo • Ynes M. Mendoza • Vernon J. Menze • *KIA 9/20/44, Holland* • Kenneth D. Mercier • Elmer T. Meth • Max M. Meth • William S. Metzler *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • James W. Miller *KIA 9/20/44, Holland* • John N. Miller *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • William T. Miller *KIA 9/20/44, Holland* • Franklin Milo • Elmer T. Minne • Alfred B. Montes • Donald J. Moone • James H. Moore • Walter L. Moore • Alton M. More • Harvey H. Morehead • David E. Morris • William E. Morris • Stanley F. Motowski • Sergio G. Moya *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Warren H. Muck *KIA 1/10/45, Bastogne* • Elmer L. Murray, Jr. *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Patrick H. Neil *KIA 1/13/45, Bastogne* • Norman W. Neitzke • Henry E. Nelson • Gordon Nuenfeldt • Lewis Nixon • Francis O'Brien • Patrick S. O'Keefe • Ernest L. Oats *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Gordon H. Oien • Marshall Clayton Oliver • Ralph J. Orth • Richard E. Owen *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Cecil M. Pace • Ledlie R. Pace • Thomas A. Peacock • Alex M. Penkala, Jr. *KIA 1/10/45, Bastogne* • Edwin E. Pepping • Frank J. Perconte • Ben M. Perkins • Philip P. Perugini • Cleveland O. Petty • Roy E. Pickel • David R. Pierce • John E. Pisanchin • John Plesha, Jr. • George L. Potter, Jr. • Darrell C. Powers • Charles W. Pyle • Alex R. Raczkowski • Robert J. Rader • George J. Rajner • Joseph Ramirez • Denver Randleman • Myron Ranney • Lavon P. Reese • Charles E. Rexrode • Charles E. Rhinehard • Farris O. Rice • Ralph David Richey, Jr. • Carl N. Riggs *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Woodrow W. Robbins • Murray B. Roberts *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Harvey G. Robinson • Eugene G. Roe • Eugene C. Roman • Clifford E. Rogers • Paul C. Rogers • John W. Rossman • Gregory C. Rotella • Warren R. Roush • Richard C. Rowles • Edward F. Sabo • James Sarago • Carl C. Sawosko *KIA 1/13/45, Bastogne* • Raymond G. Schmitz *KIA* 9/22/44, Holland* • Vincent J. Schwartz • Elmer N. Schuyler • William D. Serilla • John P. Sewell • Edward D. Shames • John L. Sheehy • John P. Sheeley • Johnnie E. Shindell *KIA 1/10/45, Bastogne* • Urbon M. Shirley • James B. Sholty • Harold H. Simons • Wayne A. Sisk • Campbell T. Smith • Garland R. Smith • George H. Smith, Jr. • Robert B. Smith • Robert T. Smith • Gerald R. Snider *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Herbert M. Sobel • Frank Joseph Soboleski • James Leonard Sowell • Ronald C. Speirs • Ralph F. Spina • Ralph I. Stafford • Joe E. Stedman • Robert L. Steele • Edward H. Stein • Joseph Stickley • J. B. Stokes • Benjamin J. Stoney *KIA* 6/7/44, Normandy* • Roderick G. Strohl • Herbert J. Suerth • Paul J. Sullivan • Paul Supko • Patrick J. Sweeney • Jack Swinney • Floyd M. Talbert • Amos J. Taylor • Elmer L. Telstad *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • George W. Thomason • Raymond H. Thompson • Edward J. Tipper • Felix J. Tokarzewski • John C. Toner • Joseph D. Toye • Ralph J. Trapuzzano • Eugene R. Tremble • Norman Tremonti • Clarence M. Tridle • Andrew Urban • Robert Van Klinken *KIA 9/20/44, Holland* • Allen E. Vest • Alexander Vittore • Paul Wagner • William H. Wagner • Thomas W. Warren *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Harold B. Webb *KIA 1/10/45, Bastogne* • Kenneth J. Webb *KIA 1/13/45, Bastogne* • David Kenyon Webster • James W. Welling • Harry F. Welsh • Jerry A. Wentzel *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • Walter H. Wentzel • Daniel B. West • James W. Wheeler • Joseph P. Whitecavage • Elijah Whytsell • Ralph H. Wimer *KIA 6/6/44, Normandy* • William T. Wingett • Melvin W. Winn • Richard D. Winters • Donald S. Wiseman • William H. Woodcock • Dallas Elmore Wright • Richard M. Wright • Robert E. Wynn, Jr. • George P. Yochum • Ronald V. York • Arthur C. Youman • Jerry G. Young • Frank J. Zastavniek • Henry C. Zimmerman •

COURTESY OF FORREST GUTH

JAMES "PUNCHY" DIEL
Diel, a staff sergeant—seen near Carentan, June–July 1944— was E Company's acting first sergeant in Normandy. He died at Zon, Holland, on September 19, a lieutenant in Company A.

KIA means killed in action • *KIA** indicates a man who was no longer with Easy Company when he was killed.

UNSUNG Brothers

Meet some of Easy Company's less famous members.

by Joe Muccia

COURTESY OF CATHY WEST LANDIS

DANIEL B. WEST

Known to fellow Easy Company members as DB or Daniel Boone, West joined Easy at Fort Bragg after graduating from jump school. He was assigned to the 3rd Platoon as an assistant machine-gunner. A humble man, West never spoke about his war experiences—except once, when he told a nephew he "landed on top of a French farmhouse" during the Normandy D-Day jump.

DON F. PRATT MEMORIAL MUSEUM, FORT CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY

FREDERICK T. "MOOSE" HEYLIGER

Heyliger was a Toccoa man. As 3rd Platoon leader, he won respect through his humor and grounded approach to soldiering. Promoted to first lieutenant and assigned to 2nd Battalion Headquarters, he headed the 81mm mortar platoon, with which he jumped into Normandy. There, at Bloody Gulch, his platoon's fire blunted a German counterattack. In Holland, he was the logical choice to command Easy after Captain Richard Winters became 2nd Battalion executive officer. But days later he was mistakenly shot by a nervous sentry. He was sent to the States to recuperate. *(Inset is a January 1945 card notifying his wife he was in an army hospital.)*

COURTESY OF JOE LESNIEWSKI

JOSEPH A. "JOE" LESNIEWSKI

An amateur boxer by trade, Lesniewski joined the paratroops and found himself in England prior to D-Day. The US Office of Strategic Services recruited the Erie, Pennsylvania, native for special duty because he spoke Polish. But when plans to drop him behind enemy lines fell apart, he was given his choice of airborne units to serve with. He chose Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry. Assigned to the 3rd Platoon, he served with distinction in each of Easy's major campaigns—until a German 88mm cannon shell wounded him at Bastogne, Belgium. Once he healed, he returned to Easy Company and finished out the war.

COURTESY OF THE MAUSER FAMILY

EDWARD A. "ED" MAUSER

Mauser, a happy go lucky guy who liked cards and dice—one of the unit's oldest men—joined Easy at Fort Bragg. A 2nd Platoon assistant machine-gunner, he jumped into Normandy and Holland, and helped rescue trapped British paratroops near Arnhem. In the defense of Bastogne, he was wounded near Noville, Belgium.

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

EDWARD J. "ED" JOINT

Joint left Erie, Pennsylvania, for the army at age 17. Passing jump school in summer 1943, he joined Easy in England. Short but stouthearted, he jumped into Normandy and Holland with the 2nd Platoon, first squad. Like Mauser, he helped save the Brits at Arnhem—and was later wounded near Noville, Belgium.

COURTESY OF THE ALLEY FAMILY

JAMES H. "MOE" ALLEY

An original Toccoa man, the mischievous Alley dug many "6x6x6" pits for running afoul of Captain Herbert Sobel. In Normandy, he was wounded near Sainte-Mère-Église. In Holland, he was peppered by shrapnel from a grenade, but recovered to fight at Bastogne and escaped unscathed from a run-in with a German tank at Noville. He rotated home as one of Easy's longest-serving men.

COURTESY OF LINDA BLISS

MAXWELL M. "MAX" CLARK

Joining Easy at Toccoa, Clark was the company's supply clerk. When Private Albert Blithe was shot on a patrol in Normandy, Clark helped rescue him. In a letter home, he expressed horror at seeing two gliders collide in mid-air over Holland. Clark also fought at Bastogne, and received the Bronze Star for serving in each of the 101st Airborne Division's major operations.

COURTESY OF THE HARRIS FAMILY

TERRENCE C. "SALTY" HARRIS

Nicknamed "Salty" because he had attended a naval prep school, Harris was the 3rd Platoon's immensely popular platoon sergeant. A Toccoa original, he rose through the ranks rapidly because of his skill as a soldier. What made him so popular with the men was his commonsense approach to dealing with the hardships of army life. Harris was transferred out of Easy because of his role as a ringleader of the alleged mutiny against Captain Herbert Sobel at Aldbourne, England. Quickly recruited by the 101st Airborne Division Pathfinders, he jumped with them on D-Day. He was killed in the fierce fighting to take Carentan in Normandy

COURTESY OF CHRIS CHRISTENSON

BURTON P. "PAT" CHRISTENSON

Christenson—another Toccoa man—was tall, handsome, and talented at art. He consistently finished at or near the top in physical training. As a 1st Platoon machine gunner, he jumped into Normandy right behind his platoon leader, First Lieutenant Richard Winters, and landed outside Sainte Mère Église. A natural leader, he was promoted to corporal before the jump into Holland, where he fought at the crossroads on the Island. Before Bastogne he was made squad leader. As Easy moved out for Germany and Austria, he was again promoted, to platoon sergeant of the 1st Platoon. He finished the war as one of Easy's most senior men.

JOE MUCCIA COLLECTION

J.D. HENDERSON

Henderson finished jump school with friends John Julian and Edward "Babe" Heffron. All three went to Easy Company, Henderson and Julian to the 1st Platoon mortar squad. Henderson was a skilled mortar man, but was wounded in Holland. Then, on patrol in Bastogne, he watched Julian get hit by machine-gun fire. Henderson cradled him as he died. The experience haunted him.

COURTESY OF THE WINTERS COLLECTION VIA JOE MUCCIA

PHILIP P. "PHIL" PERUGINI

A Toccoa alumnus, New Yorker Perugini was a 3rd Platoon bazooka man. He had no problem lugging his heavy launcher in training. But on D-Day, exiting a C-47 violently, he landed awkwardly because of the bazooka, badly breaking a leg. Fellow troopers made him comfortable, but had to leave him. He lay there for three days. Returned to the States, he was eventually discharged.

COURTESY OF JERRY LAMOUREUX

PAUL E. "FRENCHY" LAMOUREUX

Nicknamed "Frenchy" because of his command of the French language, Rhode Islander Lamoureux joined Easy Company in England, prior to D-Day. He was assigned to First Lieutenant Richard Winters's 1st Platoon. After jumping into Normandy, where Winters became Easy's acting commander upon the loss of First Lieutenant Thomas Meehan III, Lamoureux acted as Winters's unofficial interpreter, runner, and driver. He also served in Holland and at Bastogne. In this last campaign in Belgium's cold, snowy Ardennes, he was evacuated due to a severe case of trench foot.

Into Legend

Nearly 50 years after the war, unforseen events turned Easy Company's men into celebrities.

by Joe Muccia

As World War II drew to a close, Easy Company's breakup had already begun. Many Toccoa men had already returned to the States due to wounds or because they had enough service points to rate discharge. Some men with fewer points were transferred to other paratroop units to serve their time. Quite a few men stayed in the army; they enjoyed the camaraderie and structure. But most were tired of having life dictated to them.

Adjustment to civilian life was difficult for men who had seen so much horror. Some resorted to drink to bury the demons. But by and large, they lived good lives. They went to college on the GI Bill, married, and raised families. Some became millionaires. Others were construction workers, lawyers, teachers, real estate agents, postal workers, or farmers. They worked in cities and rural areas. They enjoyed traveling with their families

Starting in 1947, one trip they took was to the Easy Company reunion. They met yearly, often bringing their families. An extended Easy Company family grew, and the veterans' children became as close as siblings

One day, Easy Company veteran Walter Gordon met with historian Stephen Ambrose, and they discussed the possibility of a book on the company. Gordon invited Ambrose and his research assistant, Ronald Drez, to the 1988 reunion in New Orleans. Struck by the men's closeness, Ambrose went on to write a book that would change their lives.

The book didn't receive instant acclaim, but actor-producer Tom Hanks and HBO decided to option it for a possible miniseries. Production took most of a year, and the resulting story of the close-knit group and its wartime adventures fascinated the country.

The acclaim that eluded the book erupted upon the airing of the last episode. The men became instant—and mostly reluctant—celebrities. Many appreciated the accolades that were heaped upon them. But almost to a man, they stressed that they had been part of a larger force; no unit was more important than another.

At first a novelty, the sudden popularity became a burden for many men. They were happy to sign autographs and discuss their experiences. But soon unscrupulous people were taking advantage of their kindness to cash in on the overwhelming demand for *anything* related to Easy Company. Overzealous fans sought the veterans out at their homes, even at assisted living facilities. The men, like their erstwhile commander Major Richard Winters, wanted only to live out their days in peace and quiet. Thankfully, the frenzy eventually abated—mostly.

At its peak, Easy Company numbered more than 300 members. Today, only a handful remain. But even as their numbers dwindle, their story shines on as a symbol of what a democratic society can do when faced with the manifestation of evil. Easy Company is becoming part of the fabric of history. But it will remain at the forefront of America's public consciousness because of the extraordinary quality of its men, and their distinguished service to our nation. ★

JOE MUCCIA *of Fredericksburg, Virginia, a retired US Marine Corps gunnery sergeant and Iraq War veteran, works with Easy Company veterans and their families to tell their stories and represent their interests*

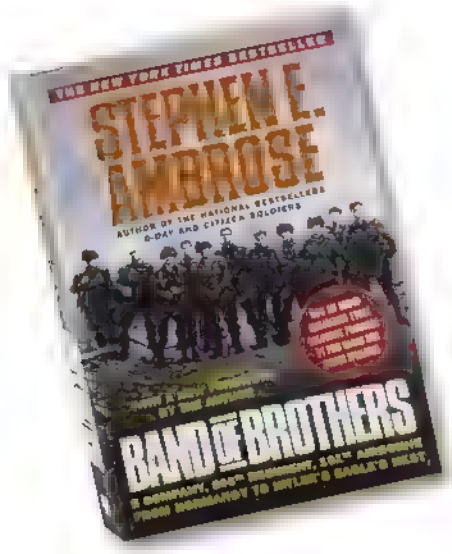
COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

MAKING EASY COMPANY FAMOUS
The 2001 HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* made a big impression on the American public, which tuned in by the millions. But it also had a huge impact on the lives of the men of Easy Company—the veterans who had lived the events portrayed in the series and the book that inspired it.

The Spotlight

How a book and a hit pay-TV series made Easy Company America's best-known, most documented military unit of all time.

by Tom Huntington


THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
STEPHEN E. AMBROSE
AUTHOR OF THE NATIONAL BESTSELLERS D-DAY AND CITIZEN SOLDIERS
BAND OF BROTHERS

In April 2003 I had the opportunity to interview Major Richard "Dick" Winters. A local magazine had provided me with his address and phone number, so I sent a letter to introduce myself and then called him at his home in Hershey, Pennsylvania, to see if he was willing to talk. "I have just one question to ask you," he said. "Have you read *Band of Brothers*?" I had, so he said he'd be glad to meet with me.

I drove out to Hershey and Winters, a courteous, soft spoken man of 84, took me upstairs to his little den. He pointed out the map he had carried at Bastogne, and showed me the boots he had been wearing when he was slightly wounded at Carentan. I saw a picture of him taken in 1944, and one of Damian Lewis, the actor who portrayed him in the *Band of Brothers* mini-series. Among other things, Winters talked about the phenomenon that Easy Company's story had become. "It has feet of its own and it's walked around the world," he said.

That it has. Thanks to the book and the HBO mini-series, it's safe to say that Easy Company is the best documented army company in United States history.

It didn't happen overnight. After the war ended, Winters took a job with Nixon Nitration Works, the family business of his friend and fellow soldier, Captain Lewis Nixon. He got married and bought a farm in his home state of Pennsylvania. In 1972 he founded a company that sold animal feed nutrients. His life was not so different from many other officers who had served during the war.

That changed when Winters met Stephen Ambrose on February 26, 1990, at the historian's Mississippi home. Ambrose had interviewed members of Easy Company two years earlier during a reunion in New Orleans. Winters had not been satisfied with transcripts he read and suggested the historian do some follow-up interviews. Ambrose agreed, and invited Winters and several other veterans to his home. After an evening of conversation, Ambrose said, "I think E Company has a story to tell."

Its soldiers helped him tell it. Winters, who had already been keeping files on the unit and its members, lent Ambrose his terse wartime diary. Other veterans, including staff sergeants Bill Guarnere and Mike Ranney, had been maintaining connections among the men. So, when Ambrose decided to write his book, he had plenty of support.

Ambrose published *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* in 1992. The title came from William Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Act

US ARMY, COURTESY OF LARRY ALEXANDER INSET COLLECTION OF THE D-DAY PARATROOPERS HISTORICAL CENTER, SAINT-CÔME-DU-MONT, NORMANDY, FRANCE

THE BOOK THAT STARTED IT—AND ITS MUSE

Opposite: It was historian Stephen Ambrose who dubbed Easy Company a "band of brothers," in the title of his 1992 book. Above: Major Richard "Dick" Winters jokes with his friend Captain Lewis Nixon, the 2nd Battalion operations officer. Winters, Easy Company's most beloved commander, was key to the success of Ambrose's book. Inset: Not only was Winters articulate, he had kept a detailed war diary. This page shows the entry for June 22, 1944, 16 days after D-Day in Normandy.

IV, Scene iii—from King Henry's St. Crispin's Day Speech to his understrength army on the eve of the 1415 Battle of Agincourt, France, during the Hundred Years' War:

From this day to the ending of the world,
we in it shall be remembered—
we few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
for he today that sheds his blood with me
shall be my brother.

While Ambrose's book had decent sales, it wasn't a bestseller. But the men of Easy Company liked the result. "Each of us was grateful that Ambrose did such a masterful job in telling our story in his inimitable style," wrote Winters, who had developed a close friendship with the writer. Winters even had small brass plaques made for his house and farm. "Steve Ambrose slept here," they read.

Things might have ended there had actor Tom Hanks and director Steven Spielberg not entered the picture. The two men had worked together on Spielberg's 1998 World War II film *Saving Private Ryan*. Ambrose had served as the movie's historical consultant. Spielberg and Hanks decided to buy the film rights to *Band of Brothers*, and the pay TV company HBO agreed to turn the book into a mini series.

Shooting for the epic 10-part production began in England in April 2000. Budgeted at $125 million, the series required the supplies and logistics of a military operation. It used 2,000 military uniforms, 1,200 civilian costumes, 500 pairs of boots, and, during combat filming, up to 14,000 rounds of ammunition per day. There were 500 speaking roles and 10,000 extras. The production used a 1,100-acre backlot divided into portions that represented 11 European villages. The sequences about winter operations around Bastogne, Belgium, were shot on a huge soundstage that utilized special rubber trees that could fall over or shred realistically during scenes of shelling. The cinematic soldiers used 700 actual weapons and 400 others made of rubber.

Before filming even began, the actors went through a grueling, two-week "boot camp" under the no-nonsense eye of Captain Dale Dye, a retired marine officer (who also played Colonel Robert Sink in the series). The goal was to give the actors a physical sense of what it was like to be a soldier, and help them form bonds like those the men in Easy Company forged during the war.

LEFT & OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

COVERING THE HUMAN COST

Easy Company medic Eugene "Doc" Roe, played by actor Shane Taylor, shields a seriously wounded Easy soldier from an explosion during the 101st Airborne Division's assault on Carentan, Normandy, on June 12, 1944. The series set out to depict combat as realistically as possible, with all its terror, adrenaline, and carnage.

"[N]o actor who hasn't walked a mile or two in a soldier's boots can adequately emotionally and psychologically portray a soldier," Dye said. "It's important to have some truth, for these men to be able to say, 'I remember what exhaustion is, because I was exhausted. I remember what it's like to take a bead on a person and pull the trigger, because I did that. I understand what it's like to slide in the mud and be absolutely filthy and stink like a goat, because I've been there.' That was the life those men lived in World War II, and if our actors live it, they can only tell the truth."

HBO flew Winters and other Easy Company members to England to visit the big outdoor set. Walking through the re-created European settings and watching the actors reenact his experiences from decades past hit Winters particularly hard. "That was probably as emotional a time in my life as I can remember," he said. "That was the first time my emotions got to me. I froze up. I'd always been able to handle these things before. But my nerves got to me."

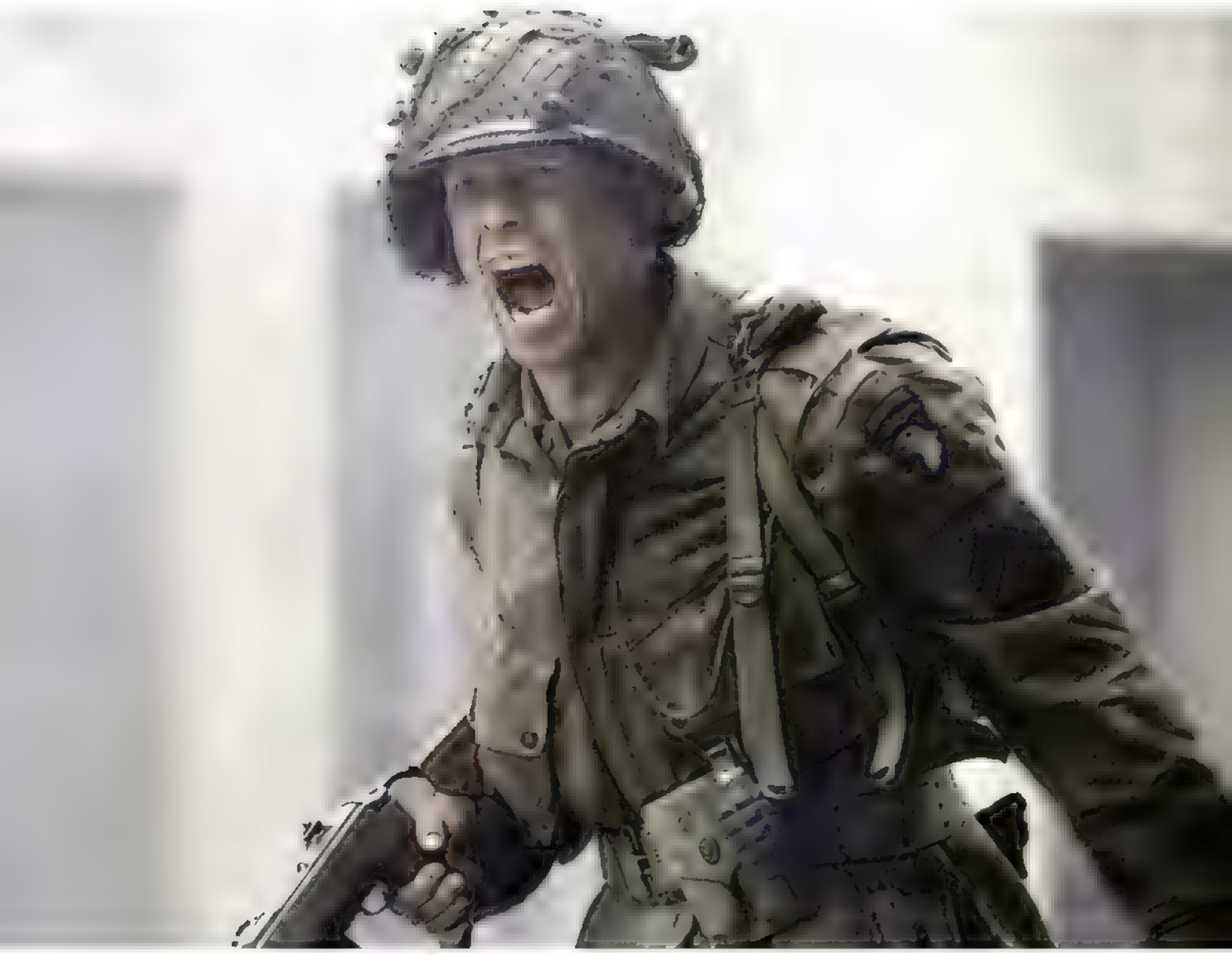
When Easy Company Technical Sergeant Don Malarkey visited the set, he too found it to be "an emotional roller coaster." "I was called in as a consultant on some scenes, and it was tough," he wrote.

Overall, though, the Easy Company veterans were pleased with the cinematic adaptation of their experiences. Winters had been surprised when redheaded Englishman Lewis was cast to play him, but the actor's performance won him over. Winters did object to some of the foul language and one fairly gratuitous sex scene, but he gave the production his seal of approval. "I think they did an excellent job," he said.

"I didn't like everything about the book or the movie," wrote Malarkey. "That said, both the book and the miniseries did what they set out to do—tell the story of this 'band of brothers,' most of it as it happened."

The first episode aired on September 9, 2001. Ten million people watched. Two days later, terrorists attacked the United States. Perhaps viewers were distracted by the real warfare on their doorsteps, because ratings for the next episodes dropped by some 30 percent. Still, the series was a hit and a critical success, going on to receive 19 Emmy nominations and winning six (including best mini series).

Suddenly, the real men of Easy Company were celebrities, Winters in particular. "None of us anticipated the flood of correspondence that followed the release of Easy Company's story," Winters wrote. "Our lives are no longer private, but such is the price of fame." Letters poured into Hershey, not only from the United States but also from Japan, China, Australia, Argentina, England, France, and Holland. Sometimes the address on the envelope was simply "Winters, Band of Brothers, Hershey, Pennsyl-



LEADER OF MEN

Donnie Wahlberg portrayed one of Easy Company's key leaders, First Sergeant Carwood Lipton. Lipton provided cohesion in the winter of 1944–45 at Bastogne and Foy, Belgium, when Easy Company suffered under an inept commander. Lipton received a battlefield commission to second lieutenant at Haguenau, France, in February 1945.

vania." He got it just the same. He received letters from young students, old veterans, and people of all ages who had gained a new understanding of what a parent or grandparent might have gone through during the war.

"Knowing little about the time all of you spent during the war, watching the mini series made me wish Daddy had talked more about it," wrote the daughter of one Easy Company veteran. "I cannot express the gratitude I felt for you and your company while watching the series," wrote a woman whose grandfather had fought in the war.

The series helped create a hunger for more stories from Easy Company. First Lieutenant Lynn "Buck" Compton, Malarkey, Guarnere, and Private First Class Edward "Babe" Heffron all wrote books. Winters published his memoirs and was the subject of two other books. There was a biography of Staff Sergeant Darrell "Shifty" Powers, while other volumes followed the footsteps of Easy Company through Europe or collected memories from the soldiers' friends and families

"To me, it's been quite an amazing thing to see the popularity of the series and book," Compton wrote. "As a whole, *Band of Brothers* afforded me a lot of opportunities to go to many far-flung places and meet a lot of interesting people." But one downside, Compton said, was that not everybody who deserved recognition received it.

Malarkey thought the attention was positive, not because he wanted to be in the spotlight, but because it reminded him "that what we did was a good thing—and over the years I'd forgotten that." After being invited to speak at a police academy training conference, Malarkey contacted a friend of his who helped him put together a program he called Frontline Leadership. They went on

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

CONVINCING PERFORMANCE

Damian Lewis, as Captain Dick Winters, opens fire on Germans caught off their guard at a dike near a crossroads on The Island, a region of Holland between the Waal and Lower Rhine rivers. Like many members of the *Band of Brothers* cast, Lewis was British, but he immersed himself in the character of Easy Company's commander.

U.S. ARMY

A WAR STORY'S LEGACY

The *Band of Brothers* phenomenon gave Americans a shared, iconic WWII story. Admiration for the unit and Winters inspired the Richard Winters Leadership Monument, erected at Normandy by filmmaker Tim Gray and the World War II Foundation. Here, Easy veteran Herb Suerth walks by the monument at its dedication on June 6, 2012.

to do presentations at West Point, before members of Congress, and all over North America and in Europe. "I feel humbled by the attention, even a bit embarrassed," Malarkey wrote. "But then I remember that I owe it to the guys who did not return. It's as if I am keeping faith with them."

In the book he co-wrote with Guarnere, Heffron said the *Band of Brothers* book "got more veterans to talk about the war, not just us, but all veterans, from the Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force. And if telling the stories makes people think about it, then we're doing something good."

Colonel Cole C. Kingseed thinks the Easy Company phenomenon owes something to its "intensely human experience." Kingseed got to experience the phenomenon up close. He met Winters in 1998 and soon became a close friend, even working with him on his 2006 memoir, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, and then publishing the book *Conversations with Major Dick Winters* in 2014. Easy Company, says Kingseed, "was not necessarily unique. It was a representative sampling of the airborne units who fought in World War II. And Dick would be the first to admit it."

Winters died on January 2, 2011. The next year, on the 68th anniversary of the night he and the other members of Easy Company leapt into the dark skies over France, the World War II Foundation dedicated the Richard D. Winters Leadership Monument in Normandy.

The monument stands near the village of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont—not far from Brecourt Manor, where on D-Day young Winters and a handful of his men disabled German guns that were shelling Allied troops landing on Utah Beach. Sculptor Stephen Spears modeled the monument's statute on Winters as he looked in 1944. Nearly $100,000 for the memorial came from a fund-raising campaign started by Jordan Brown, an 11-year-old boy from Winters's native Central Pennsylvania, who was inspired by the *Band of Brothers* series.

Kingseed says Winters was adamant that the statue not be about *him*, but that it represent all the junior officers who participated in the D-Day invasion. Yet its very existence says something about the way *Band of Brothers* turned Easy Company and its soldiers into special heroes. The soldiers themselves did not agree with that assessment. The real heroes, they often said, were the men who didn't come home.

"It is now 70 years plus after D-day," says Kingseed. "Why is there still such a fascination?" The inscription on the Brecourt Manor monument hints at one reason. It's a line from Winters's memoir, *Beyond Band of Brothers*, a line that Winters added after the book was written. "Wars don't make men great," it says. "But sometimes war brings out the greatness in good men." That sense of the potential greatness that resides in ordinary people draws us to the stories of Easy Company and its soldiers—and will continue to draw us to other stories that have yet to be told. ★

TOM HUNTINGTON *of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, is the author of* Searching for George Gordon Meade: The Forgotten Victor of Gettysburg *(2013) and a contributing editor to* America in WWII *magazine.*

WALKING In Their Boots

Actors from HBO's *Band of Brothers* look back on portraying Easy Company and getting to know the unit's veterans.

GEORGE CALIL

George Calil, a British actor born in 1973, played Private James "Moe" Alley. He spoke to us by phone from London on March 4, 2015.

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did you meet Moe Alley when you were preparing to play him in* Band of Brothers*?*

Calil: No. I spoke to him over the phone quite a lot, though. I was trying to get his accent…

I met him at the premiere. He had a very dry sense of humor. A lot of these old boys are really friendly. But Moe had, as I said, a very dry sense of humor. So, someone asked him "What do you think of the guy who played you in the series?" And he said, "I don't know—I just met the guy!"

AMERICA IN WWII: *What did you two talk about?*

Calil: He told me all about boot camp on the phone. He told me about getting there, to [Camp Toccoa]. And then he said, "That Sobel was a son of a bitch."

AMERICA IN WWII: *Supposedly, Alley once tried unsuccessfully to get out of running Mount Currahee at Toccoa by hiding and joining a group as it came running back down. Can you blame him?*

Calil: I didn't even like doing it for 10 minutes.

AMERICA IN WWII: *How much do you think you immersed yourself in the experience of the Easy Company men?*

Calil: Totally. It was, I think, the first morning we turned up. We got to Hatfield Aerodrome [in Hertfordshire, England, where shooting for *Band of Brothers* took place] around 5, I think, and we were all laughing, you know. Then we got to RAF Brighton, and Captain Dye was no-nonsense from Day One. [Actor Dale Dye, a retired US Marine Corps captain and Vietnam veteran, led the actors in a two-week boot camp at RAF Brighton and also played Colonel Robert Sink, commander of the 506th Parachute Infantry.] On average, we got about four or five hours of sleep a night.

Tom Hanks came out to visit, and he said "A lot of you guys are playing people that are still alive, and they did things you can never understand. And you owe it to them and their families to get this right."

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did you actually learn some soldierly skills?*

Calil: Yeah. We had to take our M-1s apart and put them back together. I couldn't do it blindfolded—but I *could* do it in about 20 seconds. I was on the mortars, too. So we really shot the mortars, to see how they felt. And we did a couple of night missions with compasses

AMERICA IN WWII: *How was* Band of Brothers *different from other productions you've been in?*

Calil: The scale of it. Let's say the Battle of Bastogne—there was a bit of it that had to be done in one take because the trees are coming down, you know. You didn't really have to act. They're not *real* tanks coming at you, but they *look* like real tanks. And there really *are* 600 Germans charging at you—firing blanks. It's the ultimate little kid's dream.

AMERICA IN WWII: *You're British, and yet you so convincingly played an American soldier. How did that work?*

Calil: Yeah, the cast was about 50/50, British and American. I don't know why they chose to shoot in England, but I'm glad they did, or I don't know that we [the British actors] would have been chosen. They might have just gone with real Americans!

DOUGLAS SPAIN

Born in 1974, Douglas Spain resides in his native Los Angeles. He responded by e-mail to questions about playing Private Antonio Garcia.

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did you get to meet and talk with Garcia when you were preparing for the series?*

Spain: I was extremely fortunate to have had the chance to meet the late Private Tony Garcia and his family prior to filming the *Band of Brothers* series back in 2000. He opened up to me about experiences during the war that his family never knew about. Through me and the series they got to know more about this great man. His family was very grateful for that.

I stayed in contact with Tony for five years, all the way until the last moments of his life [Garcia died in 2005]. I wanted to honor his memory. He and his family were proud of the work I had done on *Band of Brothers*….

AMERICA IN WWII: *Do you think your work in the series allowed you to connect with the experiences and feelings of Garcia and the other Easy Company men in the war?*

Spain: During the filming of the series I did contact Tony a lot. I wanted to know how he felt during the war. I wanted to know what he thought about. The great thing was that every time I did ask him, the stories would pour out. This was the same with all the men of Easy Company. They would all open up about their

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

ROSS McCALL as CORPORAL JOSEPH LIEBGOTT

experiences during the war.

The one thing that was the most difficult for me to imagine was the experience of never knowing when he would return home—or *if* he would return. I knew that he had survived the war, but as an actor, when I sat in the ditches and we went through the actions of my role, I just couldn't fathom never going home. That was the scariest recurring thought I would have. I, the actor, knew I would go home at the end of the day. But Tony the soldier *didn't* know, and that was daunting for me.

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did Garcia give you any feedback on whether the way he and his experiences are portrayed in the series were true to what he remembered?*

Spain: I'm sure it's weird having your life put up on the big screen (or any screen)…. I'm sure [Tony] never imagined his experiences would be retold years later. That being said, he felt the series was the closest thing to the real events that took place.

I think he tried to just enjoy the experience as a form of art, because reliving that time in space probably was unnerving. I mean, most of those men didn't talk about what they experienced during the war, so to see it all over on the screen must have been difficult….

AMERICA IN WWII: *How was* Band of Brothers *different from other productions in which you've worked?*

Spain: *Band of Brothers* was a life-changing experience. It created bonds with many wonderful people that will last throughout my life…. And not just with those who were a part of the series, or the men of Easy Company, but with many people around the globe.

I'll be in France in June [at the World War II Foundation's D-Day 2015 *Band of Brothers* Actors Reunion, June 5–7 in Normandy] because of this show, meeting many people who love and respect these great men. That will be amazing!

This month [March 2015], the cast and crew of the series will meet up for our annual barbecue that we've been having for the last 14 years. I don't even go to my high school reunions…!

ROBIN LAING

Scottish actor Robin Laing was born in 1976. He played Private Edward "Babe" Heffron. He responded to our questions via e-mail.

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did you get to meet and talk with Babe when you were preparing for the series?*

Laing: In actual fact, I didn't manage to even talk with Babe before I'd started filming! I'd had a long talk with [Staff Sergeant William] Bill Guarnere, who'd warned me that if I wanted to catch Babe at home, I was going to have my work cut out. As Babe himself put it, "They ain't gonna find me dead in bed!"

The talk with Bill was very informative, though. All the veterans I've ever met are very reluctant to talk about themselves, but effusive and expansive about their comrades. So, in a way, it was almost as useful as talking with Babe himself.

I did eventually manage to speak with Babe, not long after filming began, and it was one of the most memorable conversations I think I'll ever have—all 90 minutes of it! He was very open and honest with his memories and was happy for me to ask him absolutely anything.

The hardest thing for me was the accent. And after some excellent dialogue coaching, being able to just listen to him was wonderful.

AMERICA IN WWII: *Do you think your work in the series*

allowed you to connect with the experiences and feelings of Heffron and the other Easy Company men in the war?

Laing: There's no way that anyone, barring combat veterans, can know what war is like. We, as actors, try to convey those feelings but they can only ever be approximations. You just hope that you've done as good a service as you can to honor the man or his memory.

However, I will say, when you're in the middle of a firefight where there are tanks firing and mortar effects going off around you, it certainly gets the blood pumping!

AMERICA IN WWII: *Did Babe Heffron give you any feedback on whether the way he and his experiences are portrayed in the series were true to what he remembered?*

Laing: Babe was very relaxed about the whole thing. He was very aware that it was a drama based on the book, and had no hang-ups about inaccuracies or events being shifted to suit the drama or flow of an episode. Sure, he would point things out that were perhaps not exactly as they had happened, or had been said by someone else, but never because he was annoyed. It was more matter-of fact, like he just thought you'd be interested to know what actually had happened.

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

JAMES MADDIO (left) as SERGEANT FRANK PERCONTE

AMERICA IN WWII: *How was* Band of Brothers *different from other productions in which you've worked?*

Laing: The sheer scale of *Band of Brothers* meant that it was always going to be unlike any other production I'd worked on, or was likely to work on. The attention to detail, the logistics, the skill and care that people took in what they were doing all gave it a feeling that it was a really special time.

However, the fact that we were there to portray real people, and not just any old people but heroes (in the truest sense), meant there was an extra responsibility and incentive to make sure you did your utmost.

It may sound a little corny, but bonds were forged on that job that will never be broken. We shared a common goal that is rare on a job and that turned it into something that, I think, is unique.

I arrived in Normandy last year and laid eyes on Jimmy Madio and Ross McCall for the first time in 13 years, and we just picked up where we left off. That's something, isn't it?

JAMES MADIO and ROSS McCALL

James Madio played Sergeant Frank Perconte. Born in the Bronx in 1975, Madio now resides in California. Scottish actor Ross McCall, born in 1976, played Corporal Joseph Liebgott. Madio and McCall offered these reflections at a World War II Foundation Band of Brothers *event in Providence, Rhode Island, on November 12, 2010. Filmmaker Tim Gray was master of ceremonies.*

Tim Gray: *You guys had the honor…of having to play these men in the series…. You had to connect with the actual veteran if they were still alive. What was that experience like?*

Madio: …I just remember that, we got these sort of orders, and it came in an envelope…. And you open it up and it just had everything about Frank Perconte—documents and photos, and some of the things that he got in trouble for, and, you know, some of the things that he did well and his traits—and also a way to contact him if you wanted to….

I contacted Frank through a letter, and he wrote me back and I was so excited. And ever since then…we've been great friends.

I would just talk to him about what he used to do, and he said, "I was constantly brushing my teeth and, you know, I just kept

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

DOUGLAS SPAIN as PRIVATE ANTONIO GARCIA

clean." And he would tell me these stories, how in a burnt-out building he found this tub and filled it up with hot water, and that's how he took his bath.

…But you know, the funny thing about these guys is that you couldn't get information from *Frank* about Frank. Like, if you'd call up Frank, and be like, "Frank, I need some information about this, you know, what happened in Foy, you know, when you got shot," his first instincts…would be telling the story. Then he would automatically…talk about the person who was to the right of him or to the left of him. And you're like "No, Frank, I need to know about *you*…."

So in order to get information about Frank, I actually went to [actor] Donnie Wahlberg and said "Donnie, can you give me [First Lieutenant C. Carwood] Lipton's number? Because he's always talking about Lipton, and maybe Lipton will tell me something about *him*….

But I had a really good time getting to know Frank…. And I've

COURTESY OF HBO FILMS

ROBIN LAING as PRIVATE EDWARD "BABE" HEFFRON

gotten the chance to travel the world with him, and go back to Bastogne with him, and to Holland and to Sainte-Mère-Église and Normandy.... [Perconte died three years after this interview, in 2013.]

Tim Gray: *How about for you, Ross, playing Liebgott.*

McCall: ...It was a little different for me in a sense. ...And there was something I was slightly envious of, for the other guys, that I never had: that Joe died before we started shooting the show. So I never had anybody to go to, to ask questions. And he was almost somewhat of an enigma, in the sense that not many people had too many stories about him.

So I started having to dig deep, and I believe I spoke to Babe [Heffron] on occasions, and I spoke to Guarnere on occasions. Same thing as Jimmy was saying—I would pick up the phone and talk to these fellows who are still around, just to get anything. 'Cause I was relying on pictures. I was relying on his weight. He was a very thin man. So, that was important to me. I wanted to get down to his fighting weight....

Madio: I had the opportunity to tour with these gentlemen quite a few times. ...I remember we were moving in a bus, you know, throughout this two-week tour, and had the big Airborne sticker on the front of the bus.... But there was this cute little square in Holland, and it was all cobblestone. And it was, I want to say, somewhere around Eindhoven, or inside Eindhoven. Beautiful. I mean just picturesque, and it was all cafes that sort of circled the place. And all these different cafes were outdoors, and people—it was beautiful—having a good time and just enjoying the day. And the bus pulled up to where it couldn't go anymore. And then, as we got off the bus and were helping some of these guys off, you just saw there had to be maybe 200 or 300 people in this square.... And...as they got off and they started walking through this square, little by little, you just saw people standing and looking. And the entire—and I get the chills down my back when I think about it—the entire square stood up and gave these guys a standing ovation, until they couldn't see them anymore, until they were out of plain sight and walked through the entire square....

Audience member: *You made reference to the two-week boot camp run by Captain Dye. Was it just Captain Dye, or were there several instructors...?*

McCall: Animals! We showed up with our full intent of "Let's grab this by the horns and go ahead and do what we got to do." And on day one, I think it got knocked out of us....

Madio: I mean, how many times did I have to do push-ups?

McCall: Jimmy was always doing push-ups. Well, the problem was...they just drilled it in very quickly. I mean, you had to stay in character. You had to stay with your accent.... You had to salute rank. You had to know how to march. You had to know how to stand to attention. You had to know what to call your weapon—literally within the first day....

It wasn't just the captain. We had three or four marines with us at that point..., three or four army guys with us at that point, who trained each platoon and took us through our paces. And Captain Dye would come in and yell at us in the morning, and then yell at us an hour later, and then yell at us an hour after that. Couple more pushups, couple more runs, then he'd yell some more.... And then it was bedtime. And then he'd yell at us at three in the morning to get us up.

Madio: ...You'd have a long, long day. Then, depending on what unit you were in, or squad, you had to do night guard duty. Which kind of stunk, because they made sure that you weren't sleeping on the job. And I just remember just sitting out there in the middle of the woods with my rifle, like three in the morning, and I'm just beat. We ran a few times. We did some night maneuvers....

McCall: And they would have like six hours sleep in a couple of nights, which is nothing to these guys [the Easy veterans], but it was a shock to us. ★

VICTORY PARTY
At Hitler's House

US SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO, COURTESY OF THE RICHARD D. WINTERS COLLECTION

Relaxation. Relief. It's written on the faces and in the body language of these men of the 506th Parachute Infantry's 2nd Battalion headquarters. They've helped win World War II. Now they're on the late Adolf Hitler's terrace at the Berghof in Berchtesgaden in May 1945, enjoying Hitler's view and drinking the Führer's wine.

From left, the men are: John Van Koojik, a Dutch national; Sergeant John D. Zielinski; First Lieutenant Thomas L. Gibson, Headquarters Company executive officer; Private First Class William A. Walker, Jr.; Private First Class William E. Patterson; Private First Class Steve Mihok; First Lieutenant Lewis Nixon, 2nd Battalion S-2; Private First Class David B. Henderson; Major Richard D. "Dick" Winters, acting 2nd Battalion commander; Technician Fifth Grade George Haddy; Captain Lloyd J. Cox, Headquarters Company commander; and First Lieutenant Harry F. Welsh, Easy Company executive officer.

Three of these men—Winters, Nixon, and Welsh—are Easy Company men.

WARGAMING.NET
LET'S BATTLE
D-DAY
ANNIVERSARY 2015
BAND OF BROTHERS
THE UTAH BEACH D-DAY MUSEUM
ACTORS REUNION
OVERLORD MUSEUM AT OMAHA BEACH
70TH ANNIVERSARY
Currahee
OF THE END OF WWII
1939-1945
AIRBORNE
JUNE 5, 6 & 7, 2015
NORMANDY, FRANCE
WORLD WAR II FOUNDATION
EDUCATE. HONOR. INSPIRE.
UTAH BEACH
AMERICA IN WWII
WAR HISTORY ONLINE
D-DAY NORMANDY
OVERLORD
TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
WWW.WWIIFOUNDATION.ORG

SCENES OF HISTORY, SIGNED BY HEROES

Also includes the
AUTOGRAPHS
of
COMPTON & MALARKEY!

TAKING CHARGE K. Sean Sullivan's debut print shows Lt. Ron Speirs as he leads E-Company during the attack on Foy. Prints are available signed by E-Company veterans, Malmedy survivors and more! Order yours today for the most signatures!

MENTION **AMERICA IN WWII** WHEN ORDERING FOR A **BONUS GIFT!**

VALOR STUDIOS

ORDER AT:
www.ValorStudios.com
570-435-4523 (M-F, 10-5 MST)

IN THE COMPANY OF HEROES

E-Company veterans reunite at the American cemetery in Luxembourg. Here, they feel a presence amidst the cold. Something tells them they are not alone and this silent reunion is not the last. This powerful Matt Hall print starts at just $95 signed by the artist.

PRIDE OF OUR NATION

With church bells ringing, the paratroopers of E-Company descend in and around Sainte-Mère-Église. This epic Matt Hall print starts at $195 signed by an Easy Company paratrooper and a D-Day C-47 pilot!